

ARK THE LEGEND

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ROK GAME FANTASY STORY

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Space 01: Inquiry

“Damn.”

Ark glared at the planet outside the window.

It was a black planet with mysterious rocks jutting out. After looking at the map engraved in Bao’s body, he had headed to the planet where the 3rd Divine Artefact was hidden. Yet he was facing an unimaginable situation once he arrived here.

“Why the hell can’t we land?”

There was clearly a planet in front of him. But it wasn’t possible to land his spaceship. He couldn’t find the terrain, climate or any air currents. He couldn’t even approach it. When heading towards the planet, the ship would suddenly move to the other side.

It was a mysterious phenomenon that couldn’t be understood at all! Tori who had a rich sailing experience....

“Ghost planet! This is a ghost planet!”

....He was rattling on about nonsense.

“I heard about it. Hyung-nim, Hegel and Milan just came to the frontier so you don’t know about it but this is something all sailors know. A ghost planet is somewhere in the frontier that only the dead can enter. Any person who tries to enter the planet will receive a curse.”

“C-curse?”

“What in the world....is this a joke?”

Milan and Hegel looked uneasy at Tori’s words.

“I’m joking? Do you think I would joke in a situation like this? Really! I clearly heard it. A friend’s uncle’s grandfather found a ghost planet and got cursed, losing all his fur!”

“A-all his fur?”

Hegel who was from the Grey clan looked at his smooth body. Tori shouted in a pained voice.

“Stupid! A curse! Fearsome things will happen! As a Grey, you might not have hair but your eyes might fall out instead! If your eyes fall then you will surely suffer and die!”

“E-eyes? T-that can’t be!”

Hegel covered his large eyes and screamed. Hegel's eyes covered 2/3rds of his face so it would be unimaginable if his eyes fell out. Once Hegel turned pale with fear, Tori made even more noise.

"Look! Isn't it scary? Aren't you afraid? We are doing something awfully dangerous! No, I don't know if I've already been cursed! Eh? Eh? Take a look at this. My hair! Look at my hair! I really seem to be cursed. My hair really seemed to have weakened! Hik! N-no! We should run before it is too late! Silver Star, turn around!"

And the moment he grabbed the joystick!

Pak!

There was the sound of a head hitting the dashboard. A red handprint was vivid on the back of his head. However, this wasn't due to the curse of the Ghost Planet. It was due to Ark hitting the back of Tori's head! Ark looked down at the handprint on Tori's head and said.

"Calm down and be quiet, yes?"

"B-but....."

Tori raised his head from where it was lying on the dashboard.

"This really isn't a joke! There is a curse, a curse!"

"So?"

"I told you! I really might lose all my hair and die!"

Tori cried out.

Ark had recently discovered this but sailors were surprisingly weak to ghost stories. Brave sailors who wouldn't back down from pirates would become frightened once they heard about curses. That was true even for experienced soldiers. No, the more experienced ones tended to believe in the supernatural even more. Tori was one of those sailors. Tori started talking gibberish once he was scared by something supernatural.

So Ark was kind enough to explain.

"It doesn't matter if there is a curse. Even if all your hair falls off. In fact, it isn't that hard. If you keep talking nonsense then I will make you experience it."

Tori and the crew all became silent. Any brave (?) sailors would grasp the joystick firmly where they heard about a curse. It was a scene that showed how important the capabilities of the captain was. But that didn't solve the fundamental problem. The Silver Star still couldn't even approach the planet.

A frustrated sigh emerged from Ark's mouth.

'Damn! Every time....'

The clue to the first Divine Artefact was a mysterious phrase. Then it took a considerable amount of time for Ark to find the Divine Artefact hidden on Rakunka. After obtaining the second one from Muratio Star while the map contained the co-ordinates for the third Divine Artefact. Now he needed to land on a ghost like planet? Being unable to land was even more frustrating than not knowing the location.

‘That Xanax bastard, is he doing this on purpose? Aren’t I the heir? Shouldn’t he just give it to me? Then he should make it easier! Why does he have to make my head hurt like this every time?’

He became angrier the more he thought about it. However, complaining was no use. Xanax had died a long time ago and quests were subject to the law of RPGs.

And in fact, Ark wouldn’t be thankful if the quests were too easy. The difficulty of the quest was indicative of the size of the reward. Easy quests meant less rewards while hard quests gave more.

It was an unbreakable law of RPGs!

‘Yes, there is no reason to think badly. It is difficult to find good items. And a Divine Artefact is hidden on that Ghost Planet so I have to enter no matter what.’

Ark summed up the situation step by step in his mind.

‘Anyway, the coordinates extracted from the map on Bao’s body clearly indicates this place. The galaxy map only gives approximate co-ordinates but it can’t be a coincidence that such a dubious planet is in the area. The galaxy map clearly pointed to this planet. The problem was finding a clue to enter that planet....’

Ark summoned Bao and asked him.

–What? How should I know?

It naturally replied with a rude answer. None of Basak’s memories remained anymore so the golem was still rude to Ark....anyway, Ark had been expecting Bao’s answer.

Bao had a galaxy map engraved on his body so he should have a hint to enter the planet. He rolled Bao back and forth while thinking.

–What are you doing? Ik! Why are you looking at my sides? Ik! Why my leg? T-this bastard! Aren’t you my master? Can’t you stop? I’m an honourable Divine Artefact! I’m not a toy!

He checked between the armpits and legs but couldn’t find anything. Then there was only one way remaining!

‘I need to find an answer directly.’

Ark let go of the struggling Bao and stared at the Ghost Planet again.

“Tori, try to land again!”

And the Silver Star headed towards the Ghost Planet once again. But no matter how many times he tried, the result was the same. He used various detection devices but couldn't find anything. In addition, the orbit of the Silver Star didn't change. But just before entering the planet, their location would suddenly change.

He chose various angles to enter from but failed! He changed the speed but failed even when it was top speed or the lowest speed! He failed even heading backwards! This failed! That failed! Failed! Failed! Failed!

“Waaahhh! Dammit! What should I do?”

Ark's patience reached the ground after 1 hour. Ark wasn't the only one to run out of patience.

“As expected, it is a ghost planet....curse....I'm going to be cursed....no, I might already be cursed....”

Milan, Hegel and Tori's complexions withered every time the situation repeated. While Ark was figuring out how to enter the planet, they were so scared of the curse that it felt like their blood was going to explode. No, they might've already become entangled with the Ghost Planet.

The curse of the Ghost Planet would make the people approaching go mad!

‘Well, it doesn't matter right now.....’

Ark had no choice but to make a separate plan. He tried to come up with different methods. Despite that, the Silver Star just hovered around the ghost planet.

‘If these methods don't work then a special item might be needed to enter the Ghost Planet. If that is true then it is a waste of time to wander here. No matter how small it is, I need to find a clue or information.’

There was only one thing a user could do at a time like this.

Well just imagine it. A user received a quest to find something in a ruin. Yet they couldn't find a way to enter at all. What would a user with common sense do then? The right answer was....

–NPC!

Collecting information from the surrounding NPCs. That was a standard move! It was a rule that had been there since the birth of RPGs. Of course, Galaxian was different from other RPGs. It had a space backdrop. In fantasy games, NPCs could easily be found in villages. But Galaxian was different.

Planets in the frontier were classified into three types.

The first type was unexplored planets. It hadn't been investigated yet, no special resources were found and the unexplored planet was the main stage for pioneer activities.

The second type was a colony where resources were extracted.

And the third type was a Hive. Its form was different from a colony but resources were still collected. It was a specific colony exclusively developed by a pioneer so there were quite a few prohibited places.

But a Hive offered a safe place to rest, supplies, communication and spaceship repair in the frontier so it was a source of revenue. In other words, it was a place like a village.

‘The order was probably slightly backwards.’

There was a saying passed down in Galaxian.

-An adventure in the space frontier starts and ends at a Hive.

When thinking about it, it was the inevitable result.

After receiving a quest at a village in fantasy worlds, information was gathered in order to prepare for the adventure. It was also a place to repair equipment and organize the loot obtained after finishing the quest.

Just like a village, the Hive in Galaxian was a place to start and end adventures. In Ark’s case, he already knew the co-ordinates of the destination so he hadn’t felt the need to visit a Hive after leaving Istana.

‘If there is a Hive in the nearby area then they will be aware of the Ghost Planet. Rumours would spread all over the place. Then I just need to ask the NPCs for a clue.’

It was the only thing Ark could believe in. It was easy to find a Hive in outer space. Any person within the area could use the public communication frequency. Users scattered across outer space could use this frequency to find a party or trade items.

-Seeking a party in the area of Planet Fatima!

-Looking for users for a Class A Difficulty planet!

-Sending a rescue quest! Suddenly! My engine failed so it is impossible to sail. Anybody in the area please send a personal communication to the recognition number T-9011. I’ll be very thankful.

-Selling a rare rocket launcher at 20% cheaper than the market price! In addition, selling various supplies for 10~20% cheaper! I will warp as soon as I’m contacted!

-Selling various types of equipment made from meteor materials! For sale! For sale! For sale!

-Buying various types of equipment made from meteor materials! Buy! Buy! Buy!

....Well, that was the purpose of the channel.

Most of the content was no different from noise but when moving to a new area, it was necessary to check the public channel for a bit.

“Connect to the communication frequency channel.”

Ark said as he looked at Hegel. Noise flowed out from the on-board loudspeaker before a voice could be heard.

-.....Pioneer, pioneer, pioneers looking for a Hive should come here to Inquiry! Contains various fuels, food, ammunition, and androids for emergency repairs and any equipment required for space adventures at a reasonable price. In addition, there are dozens of experienced and skilled engineers to repair and reconstruct the ship to its best state. If you need rest! If you need supplies! Person who needs to check the spaceship before a long distance voyage! This is Inquiry Co-ordinates are X....

A commercial about the Hive was sent out. This was how pioneers could easily find a Hive. The range of the channel was 10 light years. Therefore dozens of Hive commercials flooded the public broadcasts. There were so many communications that it was difficult to distinguish between each individual one.

That was the reason why he didn't connect to the public channel. But the area around the Ghost Planet was empty so there wasn't a lot of communication received. Only the same advertisement for one Hive replayed over and over.

‘Well, that is better for me.’

“Hegel, calculating the distance from Inquiry.”

“Are we going to a Hive?”

“Temporarily.”

“Ooh! F-finally!”

Tori, Milan and Hegel's dying expressions finally lightened. And they quickly calculated the co-ordinates since they were afraid of Ark changing his mind.

“It is 54 million kilometres from our current location.”

It was the distance between earth and mars! However, in Galaxian a warp could move 1000~2500 light years so 54 million kilometres was nothing. It was like walking to the supermarket from his house. The preparation time for the warp travel took more time than the journey itself!

“Okay. Tori, move to the Hive.”

“Yes! Co-ordinates have been inputted. Silver Star, wharf sail start!”

After the warp journey.....

“Here?”

....They arrived at the advertised Hive. The Hive was built on a small, brown planet. The advertised Hive was pretty big but the dozens of lights only came from one corner of the

planet. It truly felt like a village. But Ark's attention was caught by something else on the planet.

"Eh? What the?" P-Perhaps?"

Ark stood up and shouted.

"Milan, zoom in on the shadow on the right side of the planet!"

The area Ark pointed at expanded dozens of times on the screen. The expanded area contained a considerably large hollow. Ark's gaze was fixed inside the hollow. There were 3 structures lined up inside it. There were structures on the left, right and top that formed a pyramid.....

"Pyramid? Do you see a pyramid?"

Ark felt like he had been hit in the back of his head.

'What? Why? Why is there a pyramid on the Hive?'

The pyramid were remains of the Murat. The Murat was a species that stretched across the galaxy so it wasn't unusual to find Murat ruins. The question was why it was on a Hive 54 million kilometres away from where the Divine Artefact was hidden.

'Xanax is the Murat's Elim. Xanax hid the Baius Shield at a Murat ruin on Rakunka.'

So Ark thought there would also be the remains of the Murat on the Ghost Planet. However, he hadn't found any ruins on the Ghost Planet.

It wasn't possible to check entities like mirages to be certain but he couldn't see anything with his eyes. Yet the planet he came to in order to find information was the one with the Murat ruins. How should he interpret this situation?

'When thinking back, the co-ordinates recorded from the galaxy map on Bao's body wasn't exact. The Nymphe only obtained the approximate co-ordinates. When thinking about the size of the galaxy, the slightest 0.1 mm difference could mean a difference of several light years. Perhaps there was such an error when calculating the co-ordinates on the galaxy map?'

The co-ordinates determined had led him to the Ghost Planet. It would be too much of a coincidence so Ark had been certain that was the destination. That's why he tried to land despite his frustrating and Tori, Hegel and Milan's fear of the curse.

But there was a different planet in the area with the Murat ruins. This was too much to be an accident. No, it was more likely that the minor inaccuracy in co-ordinate extraction led him to the Ghost Planet instead.

'If that was true....'

Dig!

He had wasted 1 hour for nothing.

‘Dammit! I should’ve dropped in at the Hive first like other users! Why is that Ghost Planet there to make everything more complicated?’

“Hyung-nim, perhaps you....”

Then Tori, Milan and Hegel stared at Ark. And they asked with perplexed and resentful eyes.

“Isn’t that the place that Hyung-nim is searching for?”

“Of course not. Otherwise why would we have spent 1 hour at a planet that could curse us? Hyung-nim wouldn’t make such an absurd mistake.”

“It can’t be. No? Please say something.”

“T-that is.....”

Ark stuttered with an unbearable expression.

-Communication is being received on the public channel.

-Please stop.

A mechanical voice was suddenly heard.

-Your spaceship is approaching a private property. This is a warning. If you try to land without permission then you will be shot down by the automatic intercepting system. Please change your path and land at the shopping district of the Hive. I’ll say it again. Your spaceship is trespassing on private property. Unless you deliberately have the impure intention to invade....

“Private property?”

Ark was confused by the sudden words. Hegel rushed to the dashboard before speaking with a puzzled expression.

“Hyung-nim, there are anti-aircraft radars around the perimeter with the Silver Star as the target! The anti-aircraft turrets are loaded inside!”

It could be seen with the naked eye. 10 lasers were targeting the Silver Star. If he ignored the warning then they would shoot! There was no room to talk about it.

“Tori, let’s leave for the moment. Turn towards the shopping district!”

The lasers disappeared once the Silver Star headed towards the shopping area. A message appeared once he landed at the designated location.

-Route to the Hive [Inquiry] has been registered.

<Co-ordinates to the planet Inquiry has been registered on the Silver Star. You don't have to enter separate co-ordinates and can warp sail at any time>

* Adventure Points +50

—Welcome! Welcome to Inquiry!

“Ghost Star Rock?”

Ark tilted his head. An old man nodded and replied.

“Yes, that is the name we call it. Obviously it is a planet that can't be entered. Some pioneers call it a Ghost Planet but Ghost Star Rock is its official name. Actually, it isn't an exaggeration to say that Inquiry was formed due to it.”

“Due to Ghost Star Rock?”

“It is quite a long story.....”

The old man that looked like a bear looked at his empty cup. After landing at Inquiry, Ark had headed to the tavern first. This was the best place to obtain information in a new area. However, he needed to make some investments in order to gain information from a tavern.

“Here's another glass of beer.”

Ark quickly ordered a drink and the old man continued speaking warmly.

“As you know, originally the Hive was a place for pioneers. And a pioneer always comes to a planet where they see profit. But this star system didn't have any planets that aroused the interest of the pioneers. Therefore this star system didn't have a Hive for a long time. But that changed once Ghost Star Rock was discovered.”

The old man said this while drinking beer.

“Didn't you experience Ghost Star Rock before coming here? It is a planet that is different from any planets discovered so far. No, we don't even know if it is a planet. The pioneers had never seen such a strange planet. The rumours about Ghost Star Rock started to spread among the pioneers. Some people thought a great treasure was hidden on it while others thought there was the secret of a great power. Those rumours brought even more rumours here.”

People gathered in order to collect information. Once pioneers started to gather, several smart merchants set up shopping areas at nearby planets and formed a Hive. This was the reason why this Hive was called Inquiry. The pioneers that gathered to investigate Ghost Star Rock would form a Hive.

“It is no joke once pioneers gather in full force. Dozens of ships came every day so it was difficult to find a spot to land. Of course there would be a lot of problems. Pioneers weren’t people with docile characters. Furthermore, all the pioneers gathered were competitors aiming for the treasure. There were daily fights between pioneers at the taverns and the spaceships in orbit around Inquiry. The merchants were thankful for Inquiry. When they were fighting, all sorts of ammunition would be sold and the spaceships also needed to be repaired.”

The old man smirked with beer foam covering his mouth.

“But now there isn’t a lot of people.”

Ark looked around and said.

Like he said, the tavern was the best place to exchange information between user and user or user and NPC. The taverns near hunting grounds were always overflowing with people. But right now, the only people sitting inside the tavern was Ark and the old man.

The atmosphere outside the tavern wasn’t much different. When Ark landed in the shopping district, it was lined with 30~40 stores but most of them were empty. That’s why only 10 lights were visible. When landing on the Hive, there was only a bleak atmosphere while wind swirled in the empty square.

“Yes, that was an old situation.”

The old man sighed while smoking his cigarette.

“A large number of pioneers visited Ghost Star Rock for several years in order to uncover the secret. However, not one person succeeded. It soon started to spread that the planet was a mirage caused by a natural phenomenon. Once several pioneers suffered from sudden accidents, rumours spread that the Ghost Planet was cursed. It really was a moment. Thanks to the rumours, pioneers gradually stopped coming to the Hive. And it is now as you can see. You are the only guest this month.”

“Then the identity of Ghost Star Rock hasn’t been revealed yet.”

“Yes that’s right.”

Ark sighed at the end of the old man’s words.

In fact, Ark had yet to regret his actions. Including when he played Super Mario, Ark had a gaming background of 20 years. Ark’s intuition was telling him something. There must be something there. Common sense suggested that there was a secret hidden on the Ghost Planet.

‘The probability that a treasure is hidden is also high.’

Besides, no one had ever solved the secret. It meant he could monopolize anything he found on the Ghost Planet. Even if it was a mistake, it was lucky that he had found the Ghost Planet.

However, the reason Ark came here was to find the Divine Artefact. Of course, he was interested in the treasure but the priority was the Divine Artefacts. And he already found a suspicious area on Inquiry.

Right next to the shopping centre was the pyramid. But he had failed to investigate it properly. That's because it was specified as someone's private property.

"But Inquiry will soon regain its energy."

Then the old man smiled and said.

"New ruins were found on Inquiry."

"The pyramid?"

"You saw it."

"Yes, I saw it before landing on Inquiry. But I wasn't allowed access. My spaceship approached without any ideas and was intercepted."

"Kuk kuk kuk, of course that happened. It is natural. They are nervous people."

"Nervous people? Who do you mean?"

"Berami's cronies."

"Berami?"

"Yes, that sneaky bastard."

The old man explained with an unpleasant expression. The days of the numerous pioneers had passed and the pyramid were only recently discovered. The pyramid had been buried in the ground. The turbulent wind on Inquiry blew the sand away and exposed part of the pyramid for the merchants to notice.

"We thought this was a good opportunity. The pioneers had stopped becoming interested in Inquiry so the merchants had been losing business. Especially since the ruins were buried right next to the shopping area. The residents believed that these ruins could bring pioneers again. Therefore the merchants joined forces to excavate the remains. A lot of people came out to dig out the pyramid from the sand."

The reason was that the pyramid was in the hollow. The inhabitants gathered their strength in order to unearth those buried in the ground. It was an ancient ruins for the first time! The residents of Inquiry didn't doubt that the pioneers would come again. And just when the presence of the ruins was going to be advertised.

"That Berami guy showed up. He placed barbed wire around the ruins, claimed the pyramid as his own and suddenly we couldn't access it."

The residents thought it was absurd. However, he had a basis for claiming it as his own. There were a few rules on the space frontier to prevent senseless conflicts. One of them was an exclusive grace period.

If he had to explain, let's just say that some pioneers found some ruins. At this point, stronger pioneers would forcefully take over. To prevent this, there was the exclusive grace period. Once new ruins were found, they would register the ruins with the Council and could gain the exclusive right to investigate for a certain period of time.

"We didn't think that far. Because ruins had always been discovered by pioneers. Yet that ridiculous guy Berami registered that he found it first."

"Then the person who claimed that as private land...."

"Berami! That sneaky bastard."

The old person replied in an angry voice.

"We later learned that Berami specialized in this. He would snoop around to find rumours about resources on planets and then swoop in to monopolize it. We wanted to resuscitate the Hive but those hyena like guys hired mercenaries to keep us out. But we don't even have the money to move so we're just staying on this Hive while dying. We can't go against the Council's rules."

"But why are those guys nervous?"

"The exclusive grace period is almost over."

It wasn't necessary to talk about the reason why Berami monopolized the pyramid. It was an opportunity to obtain relics. There was likely to be highly valued artefacts excavated at the ruins. Thus Berami rallied a large number of slaves to excavate the ruins. However, the result was a bit lacking.

So far, Berami had only obtained a few antiques. Even if he sold them, it wouldn't cover the cost of the slaves' meal expenses. And now Berami only had a week left on his exclusive grace period. Once that period ended, the residents would start promoting the pyramid and many pioneers could come.

'A week.....'

A frustrated sigh emerged from Ark's mouth. Berami's exclusive grace period ended in a week. This meant Ark couldn't investigate the pyramid for one week. He could use that time to gather money for the planet development. Now he couldn't chase after it immediately. But that didn't mean he had to do nothing. And even so, he couldn't waste one week here. That wasn't his only worry.

'One week isn't a short amount of time. Berami is desperate so he might invest more time in order to find something before the exclusive grace period ends. There is no guarantee that anything will remain after a week. No, the probability was high that he

will obtain relics to sell. That probability becomes higher as time passes. And if he finds the Divine Artefact during the exclusive grace period....’

It was difficult to believe. Ark was looking for the Divine Artefacts that were the keepsake of the Elim Xanax. Xanax wasn’t stupid to hide it in a place where it could be easily found. He had hidden the Baius Shield in a place only the Elim’s Heir could find. However, Ark couldn’t bet on that 100%.

–Worship the God at the River of Eternity and look at the rising sun to see the sacred numbers become unlucky numbers. Advance from there and you will be able to find the token of new life. Dig with all you might under your feet.

For example, there might be a clue like that. There was no law that didn’t say there wouldn’t be a clue to the treasure. They couldn’t also dig at the place by accident. How could he guarantee that Berami and his slaves wouldn’t find it and sell it?

‘When thinking about it from my position, it might become even more troublesome once the exclusive grave period ends. At the end of the exclusive grace period, the ruins will be promoted and pioneers will come running to Inquiry. In the end, there will just be more pioneers searching at the ruins.’

That situation would be the greatest burden on Ark.

‘Is there a way to investigate the ruins?’

He could sneak in using Stealth. However, Berami’s slaves were working inside the ruins. It was impossible to investigate such a spacious site without being detected by them. If he did it that way then the problem would intensify.

If Berami discovered him then that could lead to trouble with the Council.

‘Damn, it seemed easier this time because I got the galaxy map from Bao but it is gradually getting harder. First I needed a way to enter the Ghost Planet and now it is entering the pyramid. But I can’t just wait and do nothing....’

Wiing!

There was a mechanical sound as the tavern doors opened. When he turned around, a small alien with 8 legs had entered the tavern. And it walked past Ark to the tavern owner.

–I came to receive today’s food for Master.

“Here it is. 50 Space Food, right?”

–Thank you.

The alien humbly lowered its head. Then it exited while carrying a package three or four times bigger than it.

Ark watched in dumb surprise before asking the old man.

“T-that alien just now?”

“Like I said, they are Berami’s slaves. Anyway, it is terrible. He found such children and made them work as slaves. Frankly, I wouldn’t see any food to Berami but the slaves are so pitiful that I have to sell it.”

“Excuse me.”

Ark said while standing up.

“Hyung-nim!”

Milan ran towards him after he exited the tavern. While Ark was collecting information, he had also given Tori, Milan and Hegel tasks to do.

First, Tori and Hegel went shopping.

Once again, this was a Hive. The types of goods and prices varied depending on the star system that the Hive belonged to. It was the same logic as when seafood was cheap at a harbour or iron ore at a mine. The merchants in the frontier would be an item cheaply and then sell it for a high price at another Hive.

Of course, Ark wasn’t a merchant. However, he had landed on a Hive and the Silver Star’s warehouse was empty.

‘If I sell it at S-20 then I can make a profit. Anyway, I’m not a professional merchant but I can still make profit.’

Ark wasn’t a special case. He couldn’t freely wander around on his spaceship. Every time he sailed into the universe, he spend 2,000 gold on 4 fuel rods. It could be used for quite a while but it wasn’t easy to make money using a spaceship.

Tori and Hegel were useful in calculating things like this. On the other hand, Milan....

“Did you check?”

“Yes, the boundary is tight. There is barbed wire around the ruins and motion sensors. I also saw a few androids acting as guards.”

Milan took over investigating the ruins. If someone controlled the pyramid, the first thing they would think of was other people trying to enter. Therefore Ark sent Milan to check the guards. If the security was this much then it would be hard to use Stealth. However.....

“But I saw people I never would’ve thought of at the pyramid.”

“The Charenjok?”

“Eh? How did Hyung-nim know?”

“I saw a young Charenjok in the tavern.”

That’s right. The little alien Ark saw in the tavern was a Charenjok. Berami had mobilized the Charenjok as slaves to excavate the ruins. They were wearing a Slave’s Collar.

“How many Charenjok are there?”

“They continue to come and go while carrying stones or dirt so I don’t know the exact number. Once I saw at least 60~70 of them.”

“He gathered quite a large number of slaves to excavate the ruins.”

“It’s hard to say because I didn’t enter but it seems quite serious. The remains are buried in the ground so they have to move stones and dirt. While I was watching, the Charenjok didn’t rest and just carried the stones and dirt.”

Yet the daunting task hadn’t been completed yet.

“By the way, those guys really have no consideration for the Charenjok. If there is even a slight delay then they don’t hesitate to kick or whip the Charenjok. I have a close friendship with the Charenjok of S-20 so my anger was surging at the sight.”

“How many people did you see ordering around the Charenjok?”

“Not that many. I only saw 4 people.”

“You didn’t see inside the pyramid?”

“Yes, it wasn’t visible. It was easier to watch the slaves outside than the ones in the interior. But they were being surveilled. A bunch of flying objects watching the Charenjok.”

“Flying....”

“Palm sized surveillance robots. I think it is a flying surveillance camera. Usually treasure hunters who own a large amount of slaves will use them to watch over the slaves. There is an official name but merchants just call it Fly because it resembles them.”

Once again, Milan’s occupation was a Treasure Hunter. Ark had met a NPC strong in that specialized field so he knew a lot of details about treasure hunting. Tori and Hegel returned from the market while Milan was explaining the circumstances.

“There are several stores here without any worthwhile items. But several items that are hard to find on Istana was being sold at a cheap price.”

“It is all finished.”

Ark returned to the Silver Star with Tori. And all sorts of items piled up in the warehouse welcomed him. Daggers, pistols, machine guns, wire rope, shovel, tools, cameras, etc.

In fact, this was one of the nice things about the Silver Star.

Previously the items he could carry was limited to the backpack. Even if there were items useful for adventures, it wasn't possible to bring them due to the capacity of the backpack. Space needed to be reserved for important items and items picked up that could be sold later.

However, that situation changed with the Silver Star. He could bring as much items for adventures as he wanted. Ark arranged the shelves in the warehouse by the type of item.

The so called Ark's Item Collection!

It was great for decorative purposes and acquiring items in the field

"Hmm, this should last for a while."

Ark grabbed one of his collection and smiled.

"A surprisingly easy method to enter the pyramid might be possible."

Space 02: Treasure Hunter

It is painful.”

The man that resembled a mouse sighed. His name was Berami. He was a professional gamer who lived through games.

Professional gamers invested more time and effort than normal users into growing their characters, conquering hunting grounds and earning money by acquiring items.

But he wasn't the only user who was a professional gamer. No, there was a small handful of pro gamers. He didn't know the number in the past but now there was approximately 30%.

Nowadays the trend was intelligent pro gamers! Professional gamers invested an enormous amount of funds from the early stages of the game. Once pro gamers obtained a stable seat with their money, they were able to get a steady income.

However, it required a huge amount of investment in the early stages so only the 'rich' pro gamers chose such a method.

Thus another type of pro gamer was formed. They could be classified into the intelligent type, money type or both. Some pro gamers operated a store selling items at 10 times the price or there were those that scammed beginners who didn't know the market price of japterm.

Well, there was the brave type but they were mostly ignored by intelligent pro gamers. Users who were pro gamers were unmistakable in a game. And half of the current pro gamers were the intelligent type.

Berami belonged to this category. But Berami was different from the other intelligent types or beginners. Snatching things was Berami's specialty.

He looked around for pioneers who had found resources and ruins and then quickly registered it with the Council first. But he didn't excavate it directly.

In order to avoid retaliation from the users he cheated, he would hide as soon as he got the monopoly rights. Whenever he succeeded, he could obtain thousands of gold but first he needed to wait 1~2 months. Once the opponent gave him, he would quietly start a new business.

‘But.....’

This time Berami had acquired the exclusive grace period for the ruins on Inquiry. Normally he would sell it to other users immediately but the circumstances were different this time.

The opponents he snatched it from were NPCs, not users. There weren't many merchants left on Inquiry. And he didn't need to worry about retaliation from people like that.

'I can get guaranteed profit and resources at a lower price. The exclusive grave period is 20 days so if I sell it I can get at least 200 gold. There is also the investment cost...'

There wasn't a lot of chances to obtain ruins like this. Unlike the other ruins, the one on Inquiry had no monsters. It was buried in the ground but Berami could obtain the ruins if he mobilized enough labour.

'Yes, it is too valuable to hand over for 200 gold. I can obtain good things by myself. Relics aren't guaranteed but if I'm lucky then I can make a fortune. Okay! I'm going to try! I will plunge in to obtain a bit more money. I will play a direct role this time!'

Desire burned inside Berami. And he rallied 100 Charenjok slaves to excavate the ruins. However.....

-An <Old Earthen Vessel> has been discovered at the ruins.

-An <Old Copper Coin> has been discovered at the ruins.

-<Rusted Equipment x5> has been discovered at the ruins.....

He only obtained 20 antiques at most during the past fortnight. He would only receive 10 gold if he sold all of them.

"Dammit! What on earth, these ruins? Is it an ancient dumpster?"

Berami started fretting. He felt a big pain in his heart as he looked at the excavation site! Once the situation flowed this way, his followers immediately began to feel uneasy.

"Hyung-nim, what do we do now?"

"If this continues then it will be a perfect deficit!"

"We installed anti-aircraft guns around the ruins and even borrowed the Charenjok slaves. It costs 30 gold a day and we borrowed them for 20 days so that is 600 gold! We also have no money now. If we don't find any expensive relics in the remaining period then there will be no way to pay the rental cost."

"Hyung-nim should know the nature of humans. If we don't pay the rental cost by the appointed date...."

"We won't be able to step foot in the clearing."

Berami was the most anxious about this part.

Berami's funding situation wasn't that good. Therefore he had borrowed slaves and an Excavator from other users.

600 gold for 20 days. At this rate, he wouldn't be able to cover the rental cost let alone make a profit. Furthermore, it wasn't an ordinary user who lent him slaves and the machine.

The user was famous in the pro gamer industry. He easily lent money to people but if it wasn't returned by the promised date then he would kill them and suck out their bone marrow. In this state, Berami would become one of those users.

'Damn, if I want to live.....'

Berami shook his head as he imagined the dark future.

"In such a situation, I might have to give him my rental deposit money! But there is still 6 days. There is no reason to give up yet. The ruins are this size. It is natural that the expensive relics are hidden! They haven't found anything so the Charenjok aren't working properly. So make them work more! Increase their working hours and beat them until they find the relics!"

"But right now the Charenjok are already coughing up blood...."

"Dammit! Why are we worrying about that now? This is a situation where we are the ones coughing up blood!"

"Hyung-nim!"

Then one of Berami's henchmen ran in. Every time japtem was unearthed at the ruins, they would come running.

"I've noticed some strange guys!"

"Strange guys?"

"The pioneer who entered Inquiry not long ago...that..."

"Hey, Ark!"

The old man called his name. Ark smiled and sat in the opposite seat.

"Grandfather-nim is a store owner so why are you sitting in a tavern all day?"

"Right now you are the only guests on Inquiry so what should I do? And you still managed to find me here anyway."

"Well, I guess so."

"But why are you here? I thought you left on your spaceship yesterday...."

After Ark arrived on Inquiry, he sent Hegel and the Silver Star back to S-20. Only Ark, Milan and Tori remained on Inquiry.

“It will be back in a few days after the necessary preparations.”

“The necessary preparations?”

“The preparations necessary to excavate the ruins.”

“Hoh, you are interested in the ruins as well?”

“Of course. What pioneer wouldn’t have any interest in ruins? The pioneer Berami has the exclusive rights now but that will end in 6 days. So I’m getting ready in advance.”

“Shouldn’t I use this time to warm it up?”

“Shouldn’t I use this time to warm it up?”

“Warm it up?”

“Well, it is something like this.”

Ark laughed and took some things out of his backpack. It was an old sword and several machine parts. Ark started to speak as the old man looked at it with a doubtful expression.

“A relic found on Inquiry.”

“Inquiry, not the ruins? These relics are buried elsewhere?”

“Of course. Think about it. The ruins found on Inquiry are a considerable scale. You can’t investigate the ruins yet but doesn’t it mean that an ancient race lived here? Of course, the real valuables would be buried somewhere in the ruins but it is easy to imagine smaller relics buried in the vicinity. While waiting for the exclusive grace period to be over, I’m going to dig for those relics.”

“No, but even so....”

The old man glanced at Ark.

“Didn’t you just come to Inquiry yesterday? Berami only found 20 relics despite mobilized the Charenjok yet you already found 10 after digging for just one day?”

“That....”

“I’d like to receive an answer as well.”

Just as Ark scratched his head and was about to answer. The tavern doors opened and 4 people entered.

“They are Berami and his cronies. Berami is the one with the yellow head. The 3 people following are his henchmen.”

The old man whispered to Ark with a nasty expression. Berami scowled at the old man before turning towards Ark and speaking again.

“I heard that there was someone digging up relics on my private land. Is that you?”

“Your words are rude for our first meeting.”

Ark frowned towards Berami.

“It is true that I dug up relics but it is unrelated to your private land.”

“Do you expect me to believe that? My slaves could barely find 20 relics while digging. Yet you managed to find 10 relics after only one day? Is it possible for you to find that outside?”

“Doesn’t that just mean our abilities are different?”

“What?”

“I have no interest on whether you believe it or not....”

Ark got up with an annoyed expression.

“If you continue to be annoying then I’ll show you. The difference between our skills. Tori, Milan. Come. You guys as well. And Grandfather-nim can come as a witness in case you don’t believe your eyes.”

Ark led the people outside the tavern. They walked for 10 minutes before entering a wide vacant land on the outskirts of the shopping district where Tori was waiting.

“How is it? This place?”

“Judging by the arrangement of the structures, this place was likely to be a crowded living space of the ancient species. Approximately 89.24%? And when considering the ruins buried in the sand, the wind likely blew from the 3 o’clock direction to the 6 o’clock direction. Approximately 93.45%? Even if there are other living spaces, the other areas are likely buried deeply after hundreds of years. But this place isn’t buried that deeply. So there is a 91.86% probability. When using the formation I devised to find relics, $89.24 \times A/B \div 92.45 \sqrt{91.45} = Y$ makes the probability of relics buried here 99%.”

“What? This bastard?”

Berami’s party looked at Tori with a strange expression. But Ark ignored their reaction and went to Milan.

“Milan, here and there. Start.”

“Yes, Hyung-nim”

Milan nodded.

Then he took out 2 iron rods from his backpack. These iron rods were Milan's dowsing tools. It was an exploratory device used to find something buried in the ground. Milan grasped the iron rods with both hands and walked around before suddenly pointing to the ground and shouting.

"Hyung-nim, over here!"

"Okay, get out of the way."

The last person to move was Ark. And the next moment, the old man and Berami's found witnessed a shocking scene. Ark took out a shovel and dug at the place that Milan designated!

Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa!

Earth flew up like a mountain! The dirt on the ground was removed and a large hole formed in the blink of an eye. It was the perfect movement with no wasted motions! A phenomenal work rate! His high skill level showed a perfect digging form! After the repetitive digging, Ark's digging skill had risen to Master level.

"T-that person?"

"Oh my god! Excavator! That's an excavator!"

Berami's group screamed from shock. After Ark had dug for several metres, huge mechanical parts emerged.

"It is japtem again. Well, this is good for a place that isn't the ruins."

Ark swept all the mechanical parts into his backpack and grinned at Berami.

"This is the difference in ability between you and I."

"W-who on earth are you people?"

"Us?"

Ark laughed. Then Tori's belly fat shook as he rocked forward and replied.

"I am Tori! I am a member of the Tiny Clan that received the Professor title after my intellectual ability was recognized. My major is archaeology. In particular, I am someone who specializes in excavating ancient ruins."

"P-Professor?"

Berami burst out with confusion. Milan came out and started talking.

"I am a treasure hunter. As you can see, my major is finding relics."

"I...well let's just say that I'm a master at digging."

"M-master at digging..."

“There are various things to do in the game but....”

Ark looked at Berami’s group making a stupid expression and laughed.

“The important thing is that we are professionals unlike you. There is a huge difference between us so there is nothing more to say. Didn’t we prove that we didn’t intrude on your private property? Then we will return to the tavern.”

Ark, Milan and Tori turned around. Then Berami shouted frantically.

“W-wait a minute!”

The corners of Ark’s mouth rose quietly. But after a brief moment, he frowned and shook his head.

“What? Are you still thinking of accusing me?”

“No, that’s not it!”

“It’s not?”

“I want to apologize. I misunderstood. Please understand.”

“H-Hyung-nim, why all of a sudden....”

Berami’s henchmen were confused by his sudden words. Then Berami shouted at his henchmen with angry expressions.

“Stupid brats! That person is a real professional. We made such accusations so of course we should apologise. You should apologise immediately!”

“Huh? Ah, yes. I-I’m sorry.”

“You don’t have to go that far.....”

Ark blushed and scratched his head from the sudden change in attitude. Berami then approached Ark and started talking.

“I’m really impressed that you can find relics in the middle of nowhere. I’m not a beginner but it is the first time I’ve met an outstanding guy like you. By the way, your name....”

“Ark.”

“Ah, you are Ark-nim. I am Berami. Perhaps you’ve heard but right now I have the exclusive rights to the ruins. So I wanted to say....do you want to work with me?”

“You want to hire us?”

“That’s right.”

Ark frowned at Berami’s answer.

He thought for a moment before shaking his head.

“I don’t want to.

“The pay....”

“That isn’t the problem. Do you think I know nothing? Doesn’t your exclusive grace period only last another 6 days?”

Berami’s face darkened at Ark’s words. It was only a moment but Ark didn’t miss the expression change.

“Wasn’t I in the tavern when I met you? I heard that you brought slaves but couldn’t dig up more than 20 relics in a fortnight. I can imagine the situation just from hearing that. You guys will never find any real money in the next few days. You will just blindly dig in the ruins and not find any relics. It is necessary to have some professional expertise. It is hopeless for you guys who don’t understand a thing. In other words, why should I be employed by you when I can just wait 6 days for the ruins to become public?”

“B-but.....”

Berami’s eyes rolled around before he started to talk again.

“When the exclusive grace period ends, Ark-nim isn’t the only one that can enter the ruins. I’m sure a lot of pioneers will be flocking. There will also be many pioneers whose expertise is finding relics. Is there any guarantee that Ark-nim could obtain the relics?”

“No. But this is the original method. No matter how much time there is, it is a gamble trying to find relics in a ruin. Sometimes you will die before finding it. Isn’t a treasure hunter someone who gambles because they believe in a jackpot? Even if everything is lost, it is better to expect a jackpot than doing work for a small amount of money.”

“I’m not going to employ you with money!”

“Not money? Then how are you going to employ us?”

“T-that....”

Berami hesitated as he hadn’t thought about it yet. Ark smiled and continued.

“So I’ll make a suggestion. It will be impossible to have motivation to work under a fixed salary. Then the pay will be sorted from the relics found while searching. How about 8-2? Of course, my share will be 8. In other words, I will receive 80% of the price of the relics.”

“8-80%....!”

Berami’s mouth gaped open.

“No way! This is a complete robbery!”

“Hyung-nim, let’s go! We don’t need to listen to him!”

The henchmen stared at Ark’s group with bloodthirsty eyes and shouted. But Ark just gave their objections a ludicrous look.

“You still haven’t figured out the situation.”

“What?”

“I can’t be assured that I can obtain the relics after the exclusive grace period. But at least I have a high chance. What about you guys? Do you have any chance? No. If you can’t monopolize the ruins then you only have a 0.1% chance. Think closely. Shouldn’t there be a registration fee when applying for the exclusive grace period? Wouldn’t you prefer to collect 20% then leave empty handed?”

“What? This bastard!”

“Stop!”

Berami shouted angrily at his followers. He narrowed his eyes at Ark before speaking.

“Only a fool would handle you with that attitude. And the numbers don’t fit.”

“What doesn’t fit?”

“Certainly you are an outstanding treasure hunter from what I’ve seen so far. I admit it. But no matter how excellent, 1 team will only be able to find 10% of the relics in the ruins. Even that amount is fortunate. But if we join hands then almost all the relics can be found in the remaining 6 days. If you join hands with me then you will benefit more than the 80%.”

“So?”

“5-5. I am willing to concede this much.”

“You don’t want to?”

“I will concede this much. If we can’t acquire all the relics before the exclusive grace period is over then the ruins will be opened. However, you guys will be excluded. You can do a lot during the 6 days before the ruins are opened. The choice is yours. We can either get nothing together or divide it 5-5. It is one of those two options.”

“That seems fair.”

Ark laughed and replied.

“Okay. 5-5. However, a condition is that you transfer the slaves to me after the work ends.”

“What? Slaves?”

“Yes, I need to a lot of manpower. Anyway, you don’t seem to specialize in this work. There is nowhere for you to use the Charenjok. So I will receive the Charenjok and concede 30% of the shares. Of course, I won’t just take them. Right now the price for 1 Charenjok at the slave market is 30~40 gold. If you have 100 then they will be worth 3,000~4,000 gold. When assuming that is 30%, wouldn’t the total income be 10,000 gold? That’s the condition. If the total income doesn’t exceed 10,000 gold then you can forget any talk about the Charenjok.”

“1...10,000 gold!”

Berami’s mouth opened absent-mindedly. If he couldn’t find any relics then he couldn’t pay off his 600 gold debt. Yet Ark just casually mentioned 10,000 gold. Of course, he didn’t know if that much money was possible but it didn’t seem to be a joke.

Then one of Berami’s followers started talking.

“B-but the Charenjok originally....”

“That’s fine.”

Berami waved a hand and interrupted his follower’s words.

“Okay. I accept. The condition is 5-5. If the income exceeds 10,000 gold then the Charenjok will be handed over.”

“That is an excellent choice. You won’t regret it.”

Ark and Berami shook hands. Following the consensus, a contract was signed.

-The contract with Berami-nim has been completed.

Contractors: Ark- Berami

Contents: All relics unearthed in the ruins will be distributed in a 5 to 5 ratio between Ark and Berami.

In addition, the 100 Charenjok slaves will be transferred once the contract expires. However, the transfer of the Charenjok slaves will only apply once the total income exceeds 10,000 gold.

While the contract is in progress, Ark will be in charge of all the excavation work. Instead, Berami has the right to supervise all the excavation work.

This contract will apply unless something disgraceful occurs or the contract is violated.

The contract was completed! Ark went to the pyramid with Berami’s party.

“That Ark, he is a ruthless bastard.”

“It is the first time I’ve seen someone so merciless. In fact, sometimes I was thinking ‘eh, isn’t this too much?’ when kicking the Charenjok but now I think I was an angel.”

“Yes, I was a little astonished as well. I expected him to be a formidable character but to this extent....”

Berami swallowed his saliva and nodded. He had just signed a contract and brought Ark’s party to the pyramid. Ark collected the octopus slaves and said.

“Starting today, you will be under the command of the foreman Ark. Come and greet him.”

Berami stepped away as the octopuses started swarming.

The next scene caused Berami to gasp.

So far Berami hadn’t treated the octopuses as humans. They numbered 100 but he only provided 50 of them with food a day. Of course they had no choice but to starve. He also didn’t hesitate to kick or whip them.

But Berami at least had a reason. He was lacking in funds to distribute food and violence accelerated the working pace. Yet Ark suddenly knocked down the octopuses out of nowhere.

Step on them and hit them! Ink was ejected from the octopuses’ mouths as they were beaten! Ink! Ink!

It was the horrible sight of Ark committing violence for 10 minutes as the octopuses threw up ink.

“It is important to establish control over the slaves at the start. If I’m even a little slack then the slaves will play cheap tricks. They will work diligently because they don’t want to suffer. That is the secret to managing slaves. Anyway, now I can work comfortably. This can be the difference between successfully clearing the ruins or not. Once the exclusive grace period ends, not 1 copper of relics will be left in these ruins.”

He looked reliable. The skill to find relics as well as handle the octopuses! He had the smell of an expert.

“It is fortunate that we met him when there is only 6 days left in the exclusive grace period. To be honest, I really didn’t believe that he could earn more than 10,000 gold. But with ruins of this size, there will be many relics worth 1,000 gold hidden. If he can find that much in 6 days then this would be a success.”

“But even so.....”

Then one follower spoke with a dissatisfied expression.

“I feel like it is a waste. Aren’t we monopolizing the ruins now? Yet we have to give that guy half of the proceeds.”

“I’m also worried about the octopus problem.”

“Even if we did make over 10,000 gold, didn’t we borrow the octopuses from that person? If we have to transfer the octopuses....”

“You fools.”

Berami laughed.

“Do you really think I would split the proceeds?”

“Huh? What does that mean?”

“Didn’t you write up a contract?”

“There is no guarantee the contract will be met. Unexpected things can happen in this world that causes the contract to break.”

Berami explained his plan in a low voice.

“Ooh! T-that method!”

“Genius! Hyung-nim is a genius!”

“Huhuhu, I’m not an intelligent type pro gamer for no reason. That Ark bastard thinks he is wise but I grew up eating guys like them. Anyway, we need him right now. So endure as much as possible. That guy will work while we obtain the profit. Isn’t that right?”

“Kikiki, indeed.”

Berami and his henchmen had wily smiles on their faces. Then a follower spoke like he suddenly remembered something.

“But Hyung-nim, that guy has free access to the ruins while working. Then perhaps he has an ulterior motive and is plotting something?”

“I also had that question but....”

Berami laughed and shook his head.

“I placed 10 Flies around the ruins. One is already set to follow Ark around 24 hours a day. And it will also be watching the 100 octopuses. If there is some ulterior motive then the Flies will catch it before they do any damage.”

“Yes I see.”

“We just need to comfortably watch the surveillance videos and wait for a chance.”

“And he will eventually leave with nothing.”

“That’s right.”

Pajik! Pajik!

Berami grinned wickedly.

At the bottom of the pyramid, a machine started sparking. Tori's Nymphe was connected to the machine and his fingers moved rapidly as he spoke.

"That's it, Hyung-nim."

"Okay, get started immediately."

"Yes. New number 1, action!"

Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa! Pa pa pa pa!

At the same time, Ark swung his shovel like crazy. Every time his shovel moved, it moved through the tofu like ground and a pit was instantly made.

The octopuses who had experienced violence looked at Ark with expressions full of fear and admiration. However, the digging didn't last long.

"Whew, is this fine?"

"Yes. Up next is the new number 2, action!"

Tori raised his thumb and shouted once again. Ark started looking restlessly around the long passage.

The confused behaviour was repeated. He sat in a corner with a worried expression and stared closely at a pattern engraved in the wall. And he also crawled around looking at the ground.

The questionable behaviour only stopped after 10 minutes.

"How is it? Was it well shot?"

"Of course. It was clearly caught in UHD."

Tori answered as the machine he was connected to made a humming sound.

"The program has been inputted so it was continually send out the videos we just recorded to the Flies. In the simplest terms, it is a video player for CCTVs."

"No matter what Hyung-nim does, they will only see this footage."

"That's right."

Tori grinned and nodded at Milan's words. This was the reason for Ark's strange behaviour.

Once again, Ark had acted like a treasure hunter and formed a contract with Berami in order to find the Divine Artefact. And if he found the Divine Artefact, it would need to be shared according to the contract.

The Divine Artefact should belong to the Elim's Heir! However, Berami wouldn't give it up if he knew about the existence of the Divine Artefact. Therefore he needed to hide the existence of the Divine Artefact from Berami's surveillance. In other words, Ark needed to deal with the Flies.

Before entering the pyramid, Ark had expected Berami to install the Flies and took counter measures. Ark employed the outstanding hacker Tori!

Ark immediately captured Berami's Flies. The system of the Flies were hacked and the videos of Ark's behaviour stored in the memory. And Tori set it up to send the transmission to Berami.

The problem of the Fly attached to Ark was solved!

'Now, the remaining problem is.....'

Ark looked at the octopuses.

The octopuses had been treated cruelly so they jumped as Ark's gaze turned towards them. Ark scratched his head and approached the octopuses.

"Who is the elder here?"

—It is me.

An exceptionally wrinkly octopuses approached. Ark smiled at the octopus and said.

"Please feel free to speak."

—B-but....

"Oh, please don't misunderstand. The method I used before was to deceive Berami and his cronies. But that isn't my real intention. Rather, I'm a person who regards the Charenjok as friends. I would like to work with you from now on."

—F-friends?

—Elder-nim, don't be fooled! All humans are the same! He is only intending to use us! How many times have we been duped before now?

Some of the octopuses shouted. It was impossible to blindly believe in this situation. However, the cooperation of the octopuses were essential in the pyramid. And Ark possessed a weapon that would quickly persuade the octopuses.

"Will you believe if you see this?"

—Eh? This is?

“Yes, this is a token that is only given to someone the Charenjok considers a true friend. After travelling the universe, I encountered some Charenjok in an unfortunate situation. This was given in exchange for helping them.”

–Unbelievable! I never expected to see this again!

The octopus looked at the token in Ark’s hand with disbelieving eyes.

–In addition, this token has already evolved twice. There is no doubt that this human is recognized as a friend by an elder of the Charenjok! Ah, to see this token again in my lifetime. Yes, the Charenjok will believe your words.

“Thank you.”

Ark replied with a smile. Thus the Charenjok joined his group.

At the same time, Ark fully secured the pyramid.

Space 03: Door of the Dead

“You’re not owned by Berami?”

–Yes. We were caught by a pioneer with a much larger power than Berami. We left our home planet and lived as vagrants but our destiny was to become slaves. Then a fortnight ago, Berami visited and borrowed us to excavate these remains. We were once a species that lived opened but now that we’re meeting like this, it is so humiliating that I want to die....

The elder octopus Hakun said with a bitter expression. The circumstances of the octopuses was an important manner.

‘That Berami bastard, he had no intention of keeping his promise.’

It meant he couldn’t pass ownership of the slaves over to Ark. But Ark wasn’t angry.

‘That Berami bastard, he had no intention of keeping his promise.’ No, it was actually good.

Then he didn’t need to feel any remorse for his actions. Well, it wasn’t necessary to feel remorse for someone who snatched the ruins and resources from other people. Anyway, with this he had secured a just reason!

‘It is worrisome that there seems to be a big power behind Berami.’

Ark hadn’t expected that. Ark had only been thinking of Berami. No, he might seem like a soft touch but Berami had a plan to strike Ark in the back of the head. As a result, Berami was likely to cause some problems. And Ark already had powerful enemies in the Red Slaughterer and Hawk so he couldn’t afford to make a new enemy.

‘It will be better to make a few changes to the plan.’

But it didn’t make a difference to his final goal. The first was to find the Divine Artefact. And the second one was.....

“I came here to look for something important. But I am a friend of the Charenjok. I have no intention of leaving you to be treated cruelly as slaves. I’ll definitely free all of you.”

He had thought about it since the time he became aware of the Charenjok. Of course, he didn’t really think of the octopuses like brothers. They are something that he could eat comfortably.

He wanted to rescue the octopuses for the compensation. Bakum would later upgrade the token and he could also make the Charenjok work at his food factory.

Of course, it was impossible for Hakun to understand this.

–Ohh! R-really?

“Yes, I need everyone’s help to do that.”

-Help! Of course we will help! No matter what it is!

“Then for the moment....”

Ark explained everything that the octopuses should do. Then Hakun scratched his head and asked.

-If we do that then we can really be freed?

“Of course, that alone won’t be enough. But I have my own ideas. It is hard to describe so just believe me for the moment.”

-Of course we will believe and follow you. But the Flies are watching us inside the pyramid. If we do as you say....

“There are more Flies in the pyramid?”

-Yes, there are 10 following us.

“Leave that to us.”

“If you tell us the location then we will make a video by the end of the day.”

Milan and Tori laughed after hearing Hakun’s words. Despite the problem of the Flies in the pyramid being solved, Hakun still continued with a worried expression.

-That’s not the only thing to be concerned about. So far, we’ve been removing the earth and sand from the pyramid but have only unearth 1~2 relics. Now that the earth removal operation is complete, we have to start the daunting task of finding the real relics. We’ve been digging in any suspicious places. But if we do as you say, it will be difficult to find the relics and won’t Berami will be suspicious?

“You don’t need to worry about that.”

Ark smiled and opened his backpack.

And dozens of rusted and mechanical parts flowed out. They seemed to be items that had just been excavated. However, they were actually japtem that had been piled up in the Silver Star’s warehouse.

Milan was a Treasure Hunter so he managed to make the items seem like relics. In fact, the relics that Ark dug up and showed Berami actually belonged to that group as well.

Like he told Berami, Tori was an actual professor. He received the Professor title after the adventure on Muratio Star! But Tori’s specialty was engineering, not archaeology. He had no talent in looking at the ruins and determining where the relics were buried.

It was the same for Milan as well. It was true that Milan was a Treasure Hunter and possessed the Dowsing technology to find relics but it didn’t have a 100% accuracy. The reason Ark could find the item was because he had buried it in advance.

His strategy to plant 10 different relics and dig them up was all to lure Berami! Ark buried the japtem and then dug them up. He had changed dozens more japtem into relics for a situation like this.

“You should bring this to Berami in the meantime. Today just give him 1. If we slowly start increasing the numbers then Berami won’t be suspicious. This is enough to endure for 44 days.”

Once things started, Ark wouldn’t have any spare time.

‘Now it is a fight against time.’

He had to find the Divine Artefact before the exclusive grace period ended. He needed to find the clue that Xanax left here. That was what Ark needed to do now.

“The situation?”

“There is no change.”

A small tent at the barbed wire entrance surrounding the pyramid. Berami’s henchmen replied as they pointed to the images being transmitted by the Flies.

“But I really don’t know what that guy Ark is doing. He is only looking at the walls and then after a while, dropping to the ground to search.”

“It is normal.”

Berami laughed and replied.

“You can’t just dig blindly at an excavation site. A few lucky relics will be found but usually the really valuable ones are hidden. And only those that could unravel the secret of the ruins can find it. He is searching for clues to the secret of the pyramids.”

Berami also knew that much.

When he first entered, he had also searched around the pyramid like Ark. The internal structure was a complicated maze with murals occasionally drawn so there was clearly something there. He was convinced that the ancient species didn’t make a maze just for decoration. However, Berami had wandered around for a fortnight and couldn’t figure anything out.

So he had accepted Ark’s offer. He thought that a professional treasure hunter might be able to find it.

‘Asking for 80% of the profit is outrageous but....’

He didn’t trust Ark one bit. Yet unabashedly asking for such shares meant he had confidence in himself.

‘But he was too greedy. I am confident. No matter how many relics he finds, he won’t be able to take one of them.’

“Is it really okay?”

“What are you talking about?”

“The contract. If doesn’t matter if he doesn’t find anything but what if he finds relics worth thousands of gold? Couldn’t he raise objections with the Council and cause trouble for Hyung-nim?”

“Don’t worry. The problem is already finished after talking with him.”

Berami said with a smile.

“Ark doesn’t know anything. So you don’t have to worry and just keep an eye on Ark and the octopuses.”

Berami looked at the monitor.

‘Ark, I sympathize with you. You picked the wrong opponent this time.’

The screen showed Ark naively (?) investigating the ruins.

“Hrmm.”

A spacious hall in the centre of the pyramid. Ark sat down in the middle of the hall while locked in thoughts.

The Fly was flying above his head but he didn’t pay any attention to it. The Flies inside the pyramid were already dealt with due to Tori’s excellent hacking skills. No matter what the Fly recorded, only the previous footage of Ark would be broadcasted.

However.....

He had controlled the pyramid for one day. In the meantime, Ark’s actions weren’t that much different from the scene broadcasted. He walked around surveying the walls and floors looking for something. But so far he had failed to find any suspicious parts.

No, he had found it. It was the first day he came into the pyramid. Ark had wandered around to grasp the overall structure and felt an unidentified sense of déjà vu. At first he didn’t know why he felt such déjà vu. But after walking past a few passages, Ark was able to sense it.

‘Yes, these murals feel familiar!’

Most of the walls inside the pyramid were painted with Murat murals. Among them, the wall murals that repeated every time a passage branched caught his eyes. It was a mural of a Murat sitting down on a throne.

“Perhaps this is? Facilities Maintenance!”

Ark quickly pulled out a dust cloth. And Facilities Maintenance was triggered....Ark’s cleaning speed increased by 30% and the dirt on the murals were quickly removed. And a ‘!’ popped into his head the moment the murals became clear.

‘Indeed! As I expected! When looking at it with a glance, it seems similar but it is actually different. The mural is of a young man but there are a few wrinkles on his face. It is only a little but the Murat sitting on the throne is slightly older.’

Ark had seen such murals before. The first pyramid that he found in the depths of Beltana. He was trapped in an endless maze but managed to escape due to the differences in the murals.

‘If the same trick is used in this pyramid....’

Ark ran straight to the pyramid entrance. When he came to a ‘+’ and saw the murals, he was convinced. A baby was drawn on one of the 4 thrones painted. Small letters were recorded on the mural when he wiped away the dirt.

–Life shall become your mentor. Only the chosen person can learn it.

‘I’ve found it! Indeed it is this!’

Ark’s heart rate quickly reached 180. There was no doubt about it. The method of escaping the labyrinth in the Beltana pyramid was following the mural from birth to death. The phrase also meant this.

In other words, if he followed the Pharaoh’s life then he could find something! Since then, Ark meticulously wiped the murals at each crossroad and followed the right mural. The time it took to clean the pyramid and for the Pharaoh to grow to a boy, youth, adult, middle aged and old man was 12 hours!

“This is the last one!”

Ark ran forward with excitement. And...nothing happened.

He didn’t feel any signs that he had moved someplace else. The place he arrived at was a large hall in the centre of the pyramid. If he walked in a straight line from the pyramid entrance then he could’ve arrived in 1~2 minutes. The place where he first talked to the octopuses was this same hall. He had just been running around in circles and cleaning for 12 hours.

“W-what is this? Perhaps I went the wrong way?”

However, the result was the same when he tried again. He walked around the intricate passages and arrived at the hall. He tried it in the reverse order as well but the result was the same.

‘I checked it many times. The mural is clearly pointing to this place. Then the secret of the pyramid must be hidden here. But.....’

Where should he search? Right now Ark was sitting in the hall doing nothing. He wiped the hall with a rag but couldn’t even see a common painting. There wasn’t even a place to sit down.

‘Am I mistaken? Are the murals in this pyramid insignificant? No, that is impossible. The mural at the first crossroad even had a message. If the murals have no meaning then such a message wouldn’t be recorded. Life is my mentor. It can’t be interpreted as anything other than the mural.’

However, the hall where he arrived didn’t have anything. He wandered around and sat for a few hours but couldn’t understand the result.

‘But there is definitely something. I have to find out what it is.’

And after a few hours. Then a question popped into Ark’s head.

‘Wait? Is that message recorded at the entrance really talking about the wall painting? Obviously the murals are the same as the pyramid on Beltana. So when I saw the murals, I judged that the message was talking about that. I thought ‘Life shall be your mentor’ was referring to the stages that the mural went through. Perhaps thinking like that was the problem?’

If he made a mistake from the beginning then of course the right answer wouldn’t emerge. Ark considered the problem from the beginning again.

‘First the murals. The words fit with the murals so following the age order fits. But no changes occurred after passing through the last checkpoint. It means the meaning isn’t that simple. Then the word mentor isn’t what I thought it meant. A mentor is someone who teaches something. Something....the length of the labyrinth....why bother making everything move in circles? But if it isn’t the length....eh?’

Ark’s head shot up.

“P-Perhaps?”

Ark started to draw a line in the ground. His fingers moved back and forth many times in the complicated pattern of the passages that he had memorized. From the pyramid entrance to the hall. He drew the route he took following the Pharaoh and made a bizarre shape. It was strange but it seemed to form a pattern!

Ark stood up and lifted his arms.

“Come out, Shire!”

Blue light formed at his fingertips! Ark moved his hand and started to carve a blue pattern in the air. The shape that Ark made was the complicated pattern that he had just

drawn in the ground. He drew the path from the first Pharaoh to when he arrived at the hall.

Light spread across the square and an information window popped up.

-A new skill (Common Occupation ☆☆☆) has been learnt.

Rune Carving: Hajaska (Users, Active): Hajaska is a Murat rune that reveals the truth. Long ago, the morale of those on Muratio Star was low due to Murat being possessed by evil. Then the Murat sages created a new rune to give the power to 'see invisible things that don't exist.'

That is the Hajaska rune.

Activating the Hajaska rune gives the power to see unseen things. Crude stealth technology and ancient magic can't hide from the power of Hajaska.

<The user will gain the ability to see through everything for 1 hour. Mana consumption: 200>

'As expected!'

The Pharaoh did show the path! But it wasn't the length. The complex path formed a rune! The word mentor meant that he could learn a new rune. It also cleared up the next sentence.

Only the chosen person can learn it.

In other words, only someone with the Shire could learn it. Thus he mastered the Hajaska rune! The moment Ark looked around, it was like sand entered his eyes. Then a rune stamped on Ark's eyes started to shine with a blue light. And Ark.....

"Heok! W-what is this?"

He moved backwards absent-mindedly. The large hall had contained nothing until now. Yet when he turned around with the Hajaska rune, there was a huge presence.

A human body with the head of a dog, the God of the Dead called Anubis. Anubis was approximately 10 metres high and the head almost reached the ceiling. Ark reflexively retreated at the sudden appearance of Anubis.

"Do I have to fight against that?"

Then Anubis knelt down. And held a huge scale in one hand. Ark looked at Anubis with dumb surprise and saw letters written on its chest.

-You who have lived a long life, you've reached the door of truth.

Discard everything and receive your judgement. If you are a good person then you shall reach the truth.

But even the slightest hesitation in front of the Great Judge will be considered a sin.

“This is clearly....”

Once again, Ark was a smart person.

Ark had become the Elim’s Heir through his brains. Ark was the Murat’s Elim. Then in the future, he would be exploring a lot of Murat ruins. Therefore it was helpful to discover more about the Murat. Ark started reading books about Egyptian myths and motifs.

Ark had seen a similar figure in a book.

“Door of the Dead!”

A guide to the afterlife. In the book, the scale was to judge where the dead would go after they died. Anubis’ scale also judged a person’s sin at the same time. A feather would be placed on the scale along with the dead person’s heart and if it weighted the same then they would safely go to the next world.

“Does this mean I have to place my heart on the scale?”

He had to throw away everything? No, this was a game so he might not die if his heart was taken out. Ark had died many times in Galaxian but he never saw his heart. It was natural. It would be creepy to see a real heart in the game.

“In the end, I need to put something different....”

He couldn’t think clearly.

‘No, I don’t need to have complicated thoughts. It didn’t say that it would examine whether I committed a crime or not. It would be easily solved with the game’s chaotic system. Then the answer was simple. “I have to go on the scale!”

Ark got on the scale.

Not surprisingly, the other side of the scale now showed a huge feather. As expected, the judgement started after getting on the scale. Ark was a user who lived sincerely (?) so he climbed on without hesitation.

Well, he had killed a few monsters and alien species. However he hadn’t done anything to turn chaotic.

Besides, he was also the Elim’s Heir!

Light swirled around Ark after he climbed onto the scale, causing an information window to pop up.

Character Information Window

Name	Ark (R-02788)	Level	149
Species	Human	Occupation	Elim's Heir
Fame	24,730	Adventure	2,040
Health	3,600 (+525)	Mental Power	775 (+390)
Mana	0	Force	1,825
Strength	365 (+70)	Agility	405 (+88)
Stamina	605 (+105)	Wisdom	40 (+23)
Intelligence	385 (+78)	Luck	45 (+18)
Leadership	10		

* Title

Ignorant Destroyer (Wisdom -10, Strength +7, Stamina +7)

Spatial Breakthrough (Strength, Agility, Stamina, Wisdom, Intelligence, Luck +10)

Beltana's Hero (Strength, Agility, Stamina, Wisdom, Intelligence, Luck +3)

Athamas' Hero (Strength, Agility, Stamina, Wisdom, Intelligence, Luck +5)

Mediator (Wisdom, Intelligence +15)

* Contribution: Galactic Federation 27,520, Aschulat 500

* Affiliation: Dark Eden (CEO)

*Body Coating: Survivor

+ Environmental adaptation increases by 50% due to the Survivor coating.

+ The Survivor coating reduces the drop rate of Satiety by 30%.

+ The Survivor coating will reduce fall damage by 50%.

+The 'Clairvoyance' effect of the Survivor coating is applied.

It wasn't a window about his criminal record. Ark looked at the information window.

‘As expected, the answer was climbing on the scale. The fact that the character information window popped up meant it was the answer. The mystery of the pyramid is completed with this. I am certain that I will pass the judgement. Huhuhu, now whatever is hidden in the pyramid will be mine!’

Just as Ark was thinking this.

-You dare try to fool the eyes of a God!

An angry voice resounded through his head! A black form flew towards Ark from the sky. Ark flew backwards at the unexpected situation. At the same time, something hit his side and his health decreased by 300.

“Keuk! W-what is this?”

Ark rolled across the ground before getting up. And he saw a giant monster with red eyes. The body resembled a hippopotamus but the head had the shape of an alligator called the Amyut. But it was the situation that was making Ark confused.

“Why.....”

He was sure the correct answer was going on the scale. If it wasn’t the right answer then the character information window wouldn’t have shown up. And it was clear that Ark didn’t have a chaotic alignment. Yet why did a monster appeared out of the blue to attack?

“What? Did I make a mistake?”

It was clear that something was wrong but he couldn’t tell what it was. However, he no longer had time to think.

Kuwaaaah!

The Amyut opened its huge mouth and rushed forward.

“Damn! It can’t be helped. I can think about it after taking care of this thing!”

Ark pulled out his sword. A ray of white light appeared in the dark space. It was the lightsaber that the Murat Emperor Kuhwen gave him! Ark’s Equalizer drew complicated light patterns around the Amyut’s body.

‘There is only 1 monster!’

“I’ll dismantle you in an instant! Berserker!”

The white light around Ark and the lightsaber was amplified. This was the Equalizer’s option, Berserker! It consumed 1,000 Force but it increased the effectiveness of all skills by 50% for 10 minutes. He was able to immediately confirm the effect.

“Khafra Fencing 3rd style! Galaxy Sword!”

When the skill was activated, the amplified swords flew out like a fan. And the light pierced through Amyut's body.

"Ha! This is the taste of the skill."

Wiing! Wiing! Buuuuung! Wiing!

Ark's sword moved in an endless trajectory. Black liquid spurted out every time the light touched the Amyut. Of course, the enemy didn't receive the attack politely. It bit down with its large mouth and slashed with its claws. Each scrape reduced health by 300~400. His health had decreased by 2,000 before he knew it. However, the opponent was Ark.

"Welcome to the alter ego!"

The moment the Amyut rushed. Ark created some alter egos. The Berserker effect was added so he made 6 clones instead of 4. Including his original body, there was a total of 7 people spread out in the hall. The monster couldn't see through the alter egos. When the Amyut bit a clone, another moved behind its back!

Ark's sword continuously flew like a later.

-Backstab!

<The enemy will receive x2 the damage>.....

That message popped up!

The Amyut that was already in a critical condition had its health fall to the bottom. The torn up body exploded and then disappeared.

"Phew, that was a tough monster....."

Ark sighed and murmured. Then the black aura scattered around the hall started bunching up again. And an Amyut started to be created like an invisible hand was modelling it. It wasn't just one. The black aura formed two Amyut!

"T-this is?"

Kwaaaaa! Kwaaaaa!

Before he could grasp the situation, the 2 of them rushed up at the same time. He reflexively used the alter egos but his thigh was still injured. But he couldn't afford to take care of the wound. If he avoided the offensive of one monster then the other one would attack.

Clack! Clack! Clack! Clack! Clack! Clack!

The sound that emerged from the Amyut's mouth caused Ark's ears to ring.

‘Dammit! What is this? This guy was already hard to kill and now they increased to 2? Even if I kill these guys, what guarantee is there that this would end?’

It might increase to 4 monsters instead. And when 4 was killed, 8, 16 and then 32....well, he would probably die when facing 8 of them anyway! If the situation proceeded like this then he wouldn’t be able to win.

The best thing to do was to run away! In fact, he had tried that already. However, all the passages were blocked when Ark tried to run away. It wasn’t possible to escape.

‘Judging by the situation, there is only one way to escape from here. Pass Anubis’s judgement. If I didn’t pass the judgement then I would be killed by the Amyuts. But I’ve already failed. I need to figure out why I failed when he got on the scales. Then in the end, I have to fight until I die.’

-You have received a critical hit!

Meanwhile a fang was driven into his shoulder and he received damage. He had been concentrating on defence and avoidance but Ark couldn’t avoid all the attacks. Sprinkle. No, the 300~400 damage piled up and he had already fallen into a critical condition.

However Ark didn’t give up.

‘Dammit! I can’t die in a place like this! There must be another way. Something....’

Ark suddenly raised his head.

‘Wait? That reminds me, Anubis didn’t talk about rejection. He said I cheated God. I could accept that if I got on the scale while wearing the Hyde Helmet. But there is no reason for me to be rejected. Then there is something that caused it to think I was being deceitful.’

He didn’t want to admit it! Rapid’s words about Ark becoming smarter in a crisis seemed to be true. When he was on the verge of dying, his head became cleared and more far reaching. Ark recalled the words written on Anubis’s chest.

–Discard everything and receive your judgement.

“The meaning of those words....?”

Ark raised his head and murmured. He only had 600 health left! And 2 Amyut were heading towards him! He had no time to confirm the answer.

‘If this isn’t the answer then I will die!’

“Welcome to the alter ego!”

Ark dived between the Amyut and activated the skill.

However, the effect of Berserker had been released so only 4 clones were created. It was impossible to get through the Amyuts' siege with just 4 alter egos. The fangs of the 2 Amyuts hit Ark's thigh. His health was sucked out.

"Ugh! Damn! But not yet! Ankh!"

A light emerged from Ark's body and a message popped up.

The skill 'Ankh' embedded in Kuhwen's Chest Piece has been triggered!
<2,000 health has been restored>

The dignified appeared of a Divine Artefact! It was a skill that restored 2,000 health. 2,000 health was insignificant in this situation but it allowed him to get past the Amyuts.

And he jumped on the scales without hesitation. But like before, the scale didn't move. It was natural since there was no change from earlier. The Amyuts were now running up to the scale.

'If this isn't the answer then it will 100% cause my death!'

And the moment the Amyuts jumped towards him! Ark closed his eyes, bit his lips and exclaimed.

"Take off all my equipment! Automatic storage!"

Wiiing! Cheolkeok! Cheolkeok! Cheolkeok! Cheolkeok!

The equipment covering Ark's body were simultaneously removed. Then a wire popped out from his backpack and wound around the equipment.

Clack! Clack!

The mouths of the Amyuts closed.

Space 04: Soul City

Ku ku ku ku!

“Wah, what is this?”

“Earth and sand is overflowing! Everyone retreat!”

The cry rang out in the darkness. A bunch of shadows stampeded through the hole. They were dirt covered octopuses, one hamster and one man.

“....S-stopped.”

“Pant pant, it is amazing. What happened just then?”

Milan and Tori breathed harshly.

If they had to briefly explained, Milan and Tori stayed with the octopuses while Ark was running around the maze. But all of a sudden, there was an earthquake and the ground started shaking.

However, the shaking only occurred once.

“Let’s see? What could it be?”

“Damn, there wasn’t any support so a lot of sediment poured down. What happened out of nowhere? It is fortunate that it passed quickly but....”

“Can we enter now?”

–Milan-nim! Tori-nim!

While Tori and Milan were gawking at the hole. A small octopus ran forward and shouted.

–H-he is coming! Berami! Berami is entering the pyramid!

“What? That Berami bastard?”

“Dammit! If that guy discovers it then it will be the end! Cover it!”

–Hurry! Cover the entrance!

After Hakun yelled in a loud voice, the octopuses started to move noisily. They collected long sticks and used tools to camouflage the entrance. While the octopuses were busy, Milan and Tori ran towards Berami in order to buy time.

And they approached Berami with business like smiles.

“Ah Berami-nim, what brings you here?”

“The reason....”

Berami looked around and spoke.

“An earthquake just occurred in the vicinity of the pyramid. What’s going on?”

“Let’s see. I don’t know why the earthquake occurred either. But there is no need to worry. The pyramid is a solid structure that won’t be affected by the earthquake.”

“I want to check it directly so I will look around once.”

“Huh? L-look around?”

“Why, is that going to be a problem?”

“Problem? No. That’s not it.....”

Tori rolled his eyes and used ambiguous language.

He was afraid of this problem. Milan and Tori had proceeded with the octopuses under Ark’s direction. Fortunately, the young octopus guarding the entrance managed to warn them about Berami but they were still anxious.

Ark had been worried. Ark acted separately as soon as he entered the pyramid. Of course there was a reason. Ark had entered the pyramid to search for the Divine Artefact. And the probability was high that only Ark could find the Divine Artefact that Xanax had hidden in the pyramid. That’s why Ark investigated the pyramid alone.

Tori was a quick hamster.

“The earthquake occurred after Hyung-nim ran in. However he hadn’t found anything yet. The sudden earthquake might even be related to Hyung-nim. Then isn’t it likely Hyung-nim discovered something hidden in there?”

And he could confirm that change with his eyes.

Berami was the problem.

“Where is Ark?!”

Berami asked while looking around. Tori hadn’t thought of the answer so he replied with surprise.

“Huh? Huh? H-Hyung-nim? Hyung-nim....he is busy with something important. That.....”

“Finding valuable relics in the ruins isn’t an easy task. The relics are treasures so they are hidden in the deepest parts of the ruins. A lot of time and effort is required to piece together the clues scattered across the ruins. He needs to concentrate. This is a daunting task for Hyung-nim so I would like to ask Berami-nim to refrain from entering that environment and distracting him. Hyung-nim is concentrating so he shouldn’t be disturbed.”

As expected from a treasure hunter, Milan's reaction was faster. Tori nodded and quickly supported Milan.

"Yes! That's right! That...."

"I know that much."

Berami interrupted Tori's words.

"That's why I accepted Ark's terms. But it is an emergency right now. Do you know what will happen if an earthquake occurs in a ruin? I'm the owner of these ruins so shouldn't I look around directly? The Flies alone aren't enough for me to grasp the situation. Get out of the way."

Berami didn't listen to the two of them and entered the pyramid. In the end, Tori and Milan were forced to follow Berami while feeling 'confused + anxious + on edge.'

Luckily the octopuses had already camouflaged the workshop while Milan and Tori were distracting him. Berami had no interest in the tools in the workshop. The problem was what would happen when Berami entered the main hall.

'Damn, Hyung-nim is in the main hall....'

'Please don't be doing anything....'

'It is impossible. We might need to deal with this bastard.'

Tori and Milan exchanged meaningful glances behind Berami's back. Berami stopped moving and shouted.

"Eh? This!"

'Damn! There is indeed something!'

'It can't be helped. Hey, Tori. Be prepared. It will start soon!'

Tori and Milan prepared to throw their bodies towards Berami.

"Why is he on his back like that?"

"Huh?"

Tori and Milan flinched and stopped. They followed Berami's gaze with a strange expression.

The empty main hall. Ark was lying down in the middle. He wasn't just lying down. He was in the embarrassing state of lying down without any clothes.

"What on earth is he doing?"

"Well, let's see. I mean....he is sleeping?"

"Sleeping? Sleeping like that in a place like this?"

“He has a personality that doesn’t like stuffy things....”

“Ha! There really is a variety of things.”

Berami muttered as he bit his lip. And he moved outside like it was troublesome to question it closely anymore. Tori and Milan flew back into the square as soon as they confirmed that Berami left.

Ark was still lying down.

“What? Why is Hyung-nim doing this?”

“Damn, he has been like this until now. What is he doing?”

“He isn’t dead....I don’t understand. He went to research alone so why is he almost naked?”

“Maybe Hyung-nim is an exhibitionist....”

Tori was looking at Ark when he suddenly raised his head. And he screamed as he saw the Fly flying above.

“T-this! Fly! We’re in trouble!”

“That’s right! Camera!”

Once again, the Flies were only relayed pre-recorded videos to Berami. The Fly that followed Ark showed him investigating the pyramid. But now Ark was lying down in a state of shame.

Berami had confirmed Ark’s condition before leaving. If the Fly didn’t transmit that then their manipulation of the Flies might be noticed!

“There’s no time! Tori!”

“Dammit! That stupid Hyung-nim! He should do something instead of sleeping!”

Tori cursed Ark as he snatched the Fly. He connected his Nymphe to the Fly’s system and registered Ark lying down into the system. The time it took was only 30 seconds!

“Pant pant pant! D-did it go unnoticed?”

“Pant pant pant! We can only hope that it was unnoticed.”

Milan and Tori were gasping for breath after 30 seconds. A group of octopuses then came into the hall and shouted.

–*Tori-nim, Milan-nim, it is serious!*

–*The workshop...*

“Damn! What is it? What is it now?”

Milan and Tori cursed as they got up.

“That damn Hyung-nim! Sleeping at a time like this!”

“...This place?”

Ark was flustered as he looked around. The ground that stretched out endlessly was covered with sharp rocks.

“Why did I come to a place like this?”

It didn't make sense. But there was a reason for this result. Ark was confused and started to walk down memory lane.

Ark was able to connect the complicated passages in the pyramid to form the Hajaska rune. And through the power of that rune, he was able to see the hidden presence in the main hall.

Anubis holding a scale! It was the same situation as described in books about Ancient Egypt. He didn't understand Anubis's words at first but he soon understood after almost being killed by a monster. He went on the scale with all his equipment taken off.

‘...It was the right answer.’

Ark could clearly see that.

A feather was placed on the scale. If the heart of the dead was as light as a feather then they were recognized as a good person and moved on to the world of the dead. But that was in the myths.

Ark was thinking that the place where the treasure was hidden would be revealed. However, there was a sudden blast of light and he appeared in this deserted place.

‘I closed my eyes so I didn't see it properly but I must've been moved somewhere the moment the light appeared. In the end....was the pyramid just the gateway to come here? Then the real secret of the pyramid is somewhere here...no, where is this place? Did I see such rock formations on Inquiry? In addition, the celestial bodies orbiting is similar to Inquiry but is slightly different. That red planet seemed a little closer on Inquiry. The planets are the same but their sizes are different. Then another planet nearby....’

“Wait? Perhaps this location is?”

Ark lifted his head as he had a thought. He looked at the 3D galaxy map saved on his Nympe and exclaimed.

“Oh my god! There's no doubt about it. My current location is Ghost Star Rock! Ghost Star Rock. Doesn't this mean that it was related to Inquiry?”

An incredibly shocking fact! However, his conclusion didn't change no matter how many times he checked it.

It was the mirage like planet that the Silver Star had tried to land on for 1 hour. Yet Ark managed to unexpectedly arrived on it through the pyramid on Inquiry.

“When looking at the overall situation, doesn't the pyramid on Inquiry act like a Star Gate to this planet? Yes, this is the method to enter the ghost planet. Then the probability is high that Xanax hid the Divine Artefact on here. Yes, it is starting to fit now.”

A lot of unanswered questions still remained. He didn't know why the Ghost Star Rock had the form of a mirage. And if Anubis's pyramid had a Star Gate to move here then this planet should have a device to return to Inquiry.

However, the only thing that could be seen was a wasteland filled with rocks. He couldn't see any device to return to Inquiry. And Ark was convinced the Divine Artefact would be hidden here but he couldn't get a sense of it. But Ark didn't worry about it too much.

“Heh, this isn't the first game I've played. The process for finding the Divine Artefact will eventually be revealed. Then it isn't necessary to think about it. First I need to search around for the Divine Artefact. My one worry is about the pyramid....Tori and Milan will be upset if I suddenly disappeared....”

-The relevant NPC is outside the range of communication.

He wanted to communication with Milan and Tori but it didn't connect as expected. There was no way to get in contact so Milan and Tori would have to handle it until he found the Divine Artefact.

And Ark had already solved the secret of the pyramid. If he got the Divine Artefact then it would be OK even if a bad situation happened.

“Tori and Milan can handle that guy. Right now I have to worry about myself. I don't know what type of place this is. I can't guarantee what will happen. Ah, I'm also in the state where my armour is taken off. Then I should collect some equipment for the moment...eh? What happened to my body?”

Ark only just noticed that his body was in a translucent state. He didn't know all the facts.

But he grasped what was roughly needed in order to return. If he sat down and thought about it then the remaining problems wouldn't be settled. All the problems would melt away once he found the Divine Artefact.

Fortunately, the equipment was stored in his backpack without any problems.

-The equipment arrangement has been completed!

Weapons:<Equalizer (Strength +15, Agility +10, Attack Speed +18%)>

Armour: <Hide Helmet (Camouflage function)>, <Baious Shield (Stamina +20, Resistance to energy weapons +50%, Golem summoning)>, <Harkenion Armour (Agility +30, 20% melee damage mitigation)>, <Belphegor's Pants (Stamina +20, Agility +20, King's Wrath)>, <Pioneer's Footwear (Environmental damage reduced by 20%)>

Accessories: <Charenjok's Token: Lv 3>, <Cheksun's Toolbox>, <Recovery Ampoule>, <Battle Suit-Hyper Drone: Lv 2>

This would allow him to escape.

Ark embarked on a full fledged search. It wasn't necessary to go around and search everywhere. He had already seen something that attracted his interest since the moment he arrived.

It was a peculiar rock 300~400 metres away. Unlike the other rocks, this one felt artificially made.

"Indeed!"

Ark's face immediately had a smile.

When he approached closer, the rock had a shape like a scarab. It had weathered over time but the surface still had marks like it was a structure someone created. It wasn't surprising that there was a metal door with a wheel as the handle. The handle was red from rust but small letters could be seen.

-The key is with them.

Cheolkeong, cheolkeong!

He tried to push and pull the door open.

"The key is with them? Do I need something?"

The sentence written on the door was probably a clue. That's what he thought. The game had its own formula that existed.

For example, he accidentally obtained a key in a dungeon. Then there was a 90% chance he could use that key somewhere in the dungeon. If he substituted that formula into this situation then there was one thing he could try first!

"Come out, Shire! Hajaska Rune!"

The Hajaska rune that he obtained in the pyramid! It allowed him to come to this planet so the probability was high that the rune was the key. Ark's hand was surrounded by light and he drew the rune.

“Heok! W-what is this?”

A scene he couldn't imagine had spread out in front of him. There were unusual buildings shaped like onions and aliens with a head double the size running around. In other words, a village. A village had suddenly appeared in the wastelands.

And the aliens looked like those belonging to RPGs in the 80s....

‘The Hajaska rune allows me to see invisible presences. In the end, this is a village that can't be viewed using conventional methods. They are ghost like existences. This is the meaning of the statement written on the door. The key is with them. In other words, one of them knows the means to open the door. Using the Hajaska rune was the correct answer.’

It was amazing. Anyway, he had the assurance that he was on the right track.

–Hey, why are you blocking the way? Get lost.

Then an irritated voice was heard from behind him. When he turned around, a bearded black man with 1 to 1 head and body ratio was pulling a cart. Ark quickly spoke after turning around.

“I'm really sorry.”

–It doesn't matter if you are sorry. Get lost, I'm busy.

“Can I ask you something?”

–Something?

“What is the name of this village?”

–This village is called Soul City. It is obvious why this is called Soul City....huh? Why? Come to think of it, this is the first time I've heard it? Wait? And what is my name? Ouch, my head hurts. Well who cares. It is best if I don't feel sick.

What was this? A NPC that doesn't think? However, he had learnt the name of the village.

-The hidden city 'Soul City' has been discovered.

-{City Information: Soul City}-

After using the pyramid on the Hive called Inquiry, you have entered this planet. And the power of the mysterious rune has allowed you to uncover a mysterious village. This village is called Soul City. A village that has been long forgotten. Therefore most of the information about Soul City can't be determined. The species that lives in Soul City hasn't been reported anywhere else in the galaxy. If you want to know more then you need to collect the information directly. You have found the hidden city that only a few

chosen people can visit.

* Adventure Points +1,000

The information window suddenly appeared. He earned 1,000 Adventure points for finding Soul City.

‘Anyway, this is Soul City. Soul City? Then this is really a ghost village? So why is the pyramid on Inquiry connected to a place like this? And why did Xanax hide the Divine Artefact here? There are many good places so why did he hide the Divine Artefact here? Damn, I’m getting a headache.’

Ark cleared his head before asking a question again.

“Just one more question. I’m trying to enter this building. However the door is locked. Do you know how to open the door?”

-This building?

The big man tilted his head.

-Eh? I’ve just realized that this is the first time I’ve seen you. I remember most of the people in this village. It is the first time I’ve seen someone with a small head like you. Are you sick?

“No, that’s not it....”

–Well, this building. This building. Yes, you asked about the building.

Talking with the man was very tiring. He repeated the words like he didn’t understand what Ark was saying. Furthermore, he compared the size of their heads. No, he didn’t seem to know he was in a ghost state.

–Having a small head must be horrible. You can’t get married like that. No, perhaps you are already married? Well, it doesn’t really matter. Ah, you asked about the building? No, I don’t know anything about this building. Probably not. But the village mayor might know. By the way, do we have a village mayor? Probably so. Well, I guess. Maybe he lives in the rundown house on the outskirts of the village. Or maybe not.

Ark was only able to salvage one piece of information.

‘Shall I go visit the mayor?’

Ark moved through the village after getting a lead. Ark was used to virtual reality games but this was the first time he saw a place like Soul City.

NPCs with heads double the size of their body wandered around multi-coloured buildings. The world had a strong sense of an RPG.

Therefore Ark was drenched in the nostalgia of RPGs in the 80s.

‘What is this?’

Street stalls were present on the side of the roads. The unusual goods displayed aroused Ark’s interest. There were many wooden carved sculptures with an unknown purpose. But 2 different things caught his eye. They were spheres the size of a baseball. One had a red aura while the other one had a blue aura.

-Life Orb

A mysterious orb containing life force.

Once the life force is freed, the user’s health will be recovered by 100%.

<Health is 100% recovered>

-Mana Orb

A mysterious orb containing the mysterious power of the universe.

When used, spirit based forces like mana, mentality etc. will be fully recovered.

<Spirit, Mana and Force will be 100% recovered>

‘Jackpot!’

The item information left him speechless!

Recovery items weren’t unusual. However, users typically used recovery ampoules loaded into the Nymphe that only recovered by 500. Of course, advanced versions existed but presently the maximum amount for recovery ampoules was 1,500.

When considering that Ark’s health had already reached 3,600, that would only serve as an emergency measure. Yet the orbs recovered health by 100%!

It was basically an item that would give him another health. Ark had never heard of these items before. Perhaps. No, they were definitely item that could only be obtained in Soul City! This sometimes occurred in a game.

‘Life! I have to buy this! The cost doesn’t matter!’

He had the item of making this a product. Life Orb and Mana Orb, these two items were a precious commodity. There weren’t other users around but he felt like it would disappear if he didn’t buy it straight away. This was an avoidable choice for users playing RPG games.

“How much is this?”

–*You want to buy it? Then it is 500 Soul each.*

“Huh? 500 Soul? It isn’t 500 gold?”

–Gold? What is that? Huh? This? What the, it is just a coin. It looks peculiar but this isn't a bartering system. Soul. All I need is Soul. My wife and children are waiting like shrewd rabbits at home. Huh? You didn't know? Anyway, if it isn't Soul then I won't sell it.

'Dammit, this place has a different currency?'

When he thought about it, it was the inevitable result. This was Soul City. In other words, a ghost village. Gold wouldn't be any use in a ghost village. Instead the currency here was Soul. However he wasn't just going to leave like that.

"How do I obtain Soul?"

–You have to work.

"Is there a place where I can find work?"

–Che, asking a salesperson all sorts of questions. But you are a customer. That reminds me, I heard some friends muttering that a farm on the outskirts of the village is shorthanded. Go there if you are looking for a job.

Ark thought about this for a while.

Once again, the reason Ark came here was to find the Divine Artefact. And he also needed to think about the situation at the pyramid. Now he suddenly needed to do a part time job. He didn't feel like it.

However, these were recovery items that would fill up to the maximum amount.

'There is still a lot of time to find the Divine Artefact....but sometimes items will disappear. This place is Soul City. It fits the atmosphere. I feel like I will return to the pyramid the moment I receive the Divine Artefact. Yes, there is still four days remaining in the agreement with Berami. I already know the village mayor has the clue to the Divine Artefact so I have some time.'

Ark decided to postpone searching for the Divine Artefact for a while. The 80's RPG atmosphere made him feel relaxed.

Anyway, he headed to the outskirts of the village and a farm of a considerable scale appeared. The surprising thing was that the bearded NPC he first talked to was at the farm.

–Eh? You are?

"Yes, I am the person you met before."

–Yes, I remember. You still haven't fixed the illness that made your head small. Weren't you going to talk to the village mayor? Did you remember what I told you? Eh? Perhaps I am the village mayor?

The spirit of the NPC was still fluctuating. But he was forced to work under this guy.

“That’s not it. I suddenly need some Soul. Do you have anything for me to do?”

–What? You came here for work? I....I am surprised. Hmm, I do have some work for you. Please catch that immediately.

“That is....?”

Ark’s face warped as he turned in the direction the farm owner was pointing. Something was swarming the wide farm.

He had seen it before. Something that resembled drops of water with jelly like skin. It had big eyes and a mouth that gaped open. Could it be imagined? Slime. A monster made of a viscous liquid that was common in 80’s RPGs.

The farm owner grabbed his huge head with a pained expression and continued talking.

–Their meat tastes like superb jelly. But they started feeding on Soul and became big, making them difficult to catch. Look at them. Those guileless eyes. They are laughing at me. Ugh, I really want to stick a knife in them. Now their numbers have increased so much that they are everywhere on the farm. Then I shouldn’t have raised them in the first place.

Anyway, Ark now knew what he had to do.

“Then you want me to catch the slime and obtain the meat?”

–That’s right. Is that possible despite those guileless eyes?

Who can do it?

Ark had played many games and was an veteran at killing slimes. There was no reason to feel remorse even if he tortured them. Especially if he could buy a rare item!

“I will catch the slime for you.”

–Ohh! Really? I’m really glad I met someone like you. Yes, then I’m asking you. Please brutally cut them apart. If you kill 10 then I will give you a generous compensation. Despite how cute they are, I want you to cut their heads off! Don’t worry about your conscience and cut them one by one. I’m asking you....

<Catch the Slimes>

The owner of a farm in Soul City has no courage to catch the Slimes and can only watch in distress as they grow. He has commissioned you to slaughter the slimes. The compensation will depend on the skill used to seize the slimes. Slay the pitiful slimes with the sword skills you have mastered!

Difficulty: –

Anyway, Ark started the quest.

The slimes were strewn all over the farm. However, it wasn't that easy to slaughter the slimes. They seemed to intuitively sense something and avoided him when Ark entered the farm. They ran away at an incredible speed after he approached. And they were slippery. Their slick skin meant they would slip away when he tried to catch them.

The thing that made him angry....

–Ohh! You finally caught them? Eh? It escaped? Ooh! Well done! These rascals! Yes, that body means it isn't easy to catch the slimes!

The client was sitting down on the fence and making comments.

'Damn, this is enough to make me lose my motivation. Although I did think it was too easy. 500 Soul isn't a small amount but if I killed dozens of slimes in minutes then I could easily gather 500 Soul. But they are slippery so it is difficult to catch alone....'

Suddenly an '!' popped into his head. Come to think of it, Ark wasn't alone. Ark could call Bao at any time!

"Yes, he doesn't have any manners but he is still my summon. If I have that guy then I can catch the slimes. Baius Shield! Summon Bao!"

Ark immediately called Bao. Now Bao was a 1 metre high crystal golem. However, Bao's state was slightly strange when he was summoned. Normally he would say 'Ah, you called?' or 'Huhuhu, you needed me?' when summoned. However, today he just looked around with a bewildered expression.

"What? What is wrong? Did you eat something bad?"

–Eh? Hyung-nim!

"Hyung-nim?"

–It's me! Me! Basak!

–It is this way.

Hakun pointed to one side. The people who gazed that way was Tori and Milan.

Just after the earthquake took place in the pyramid and Berami left, the octopuses had come running. The reason was due to the direction that Hakun was pointing in.

–We came to work again after Berami left. There wasn't any support so part of the cave had collapsed thanks to the earthquake. While clearing the rubble of the broken ceiling, that passage appeared.

"This...."

"It is a passage made by the Murat. This is an undiscovered part of the pyramid."

Milan smiled and continued.

“Sometimes this is the case. This wasn’t revealed by accident. And usually inside a hidden passage....a jackpot will be hidden.”

“So why are we just looking? Let’s go right now!”

“You fool, back away!”

Milan grabbed Tori’s collar.

Syu syu syu syu! Syu syu syu syu! Syu syu syu syu!

Dozens of daggers passed right in front of Tori.

“Hik! “W-w-w-what the?”

“Phew! This stupid hamster! Do you want to die? This is different from the other areas. This is a passage hidden intentionally. Isn’t it natural to have security devices? No, it is natural for this passage to have dozens of traps.”

“Ugh! T-then what do we do?”

“Normally we would tell Hyung-nim first but....”

Ark was currently lying down in the main hall. They had manipulated the Fly for the moment but Ark still hadn’t regained his spirit. But this passage couldn’t be left alone for long.

However, there was no anxiety on Milan’s face.

“We’ve been too dependent on Hyung-nim in the meantime. But this is different. It is something I specialize in. I am the treasure hunter Milan.”

Pajik, syu syu syu syu!

A blue light appeared around Milan’s hands.

This was a type of flare used by treasure hunters to explore the ruins. The flare brightened the passage like it was noon.

“We should explore this place until Hyung-nim returns.”

Milan laughed as he moved forward.

“Eh? B-Basak? What do you mean Basak?”

Ark burst out with confusion at Bao’s words.

After Ark’s experience on Muratio Star, he discovered that the Baius Shield was inhabited with Basak’s spirit. But Basak had lost his will long ago and combined with the

egos of the other Casain. Thus a golem with no manners was born. So why did Basak suddenly emerge?

Bao's answer to this sudden situation....

–I don't know.

“You don't know?”

–Yes, I remember storing my will in the Baius Shield while facing Set in Tri-Force. But I don't remember nothing after that. I can't understand anything. My ancestors who were absorbed into the Baius Shield all lost their wills. So why is mine remaining?

That's what Ark was wondering. So why was the person involved asking him?

–In fact, I seem to have dreamt a few fragmented memories. It seems like the shield changed hands many time. Hyung-nim was also seen in a dream.

If you have an explanation....

Ark shook his head.

An explanation was needed for why Basak's ego returned. It must have something to do with the situation.

He didn't know clearly but Ark thought it had something to do with Soul City. The residents of Soul City were originally invisible beings. In other words, they were ghosts. And Basak discarded his flash but he was basically a ghost inside the Baius Shield.

Perhaps Soul City had some power that interacted with the Baius Shield to temporarily restore Basak's ego. He questioned whether to return to Inquiry.

‘It would be useful if Basak's ego remains.’

Bao would be eager to fight and his level would quickly increase. So far, he hadn't liked using Bao because of the rebellious personality. But Ark hadn't found a way to fix his head yet. Thus he would prefer Basak who was full of loyalty!

‘That won't be easy.’

Ark didn't have great expectations. He had spent a lot of time with Basak on Muratio Star. But after the final battle, Basak was gone and he had to say goodbye to Kuhwen. He never thought they would meet again so he was happy when he saw Basak as Bao.

–What did you call me for?

“Ah, that's right.”

This wasn't a relaxing situation where they could reminisce about the old days. Now Ark's ambition was to gather 500 Souls to buy the items. Ark explained the situation and Basak immediately nodded.

–Indeed. Nice work. I am happy to be useful to Hyung-nim even after death. I'll use my full strength to help.

Thus Basak joined in! Catching the slimes was much easier with Basak's help.

Basak was originally a Guardian. Despite now having the body of a crystal golem, he used to considerable battle experience and quick judgement to push the slimes. Thanks to that, they finally caught one slime!

“Huhuhu! Now....”

Ark smiled as he pulled out his Equalizer. The slime flinched and started shedding tears from its big eyes.

What, was it trying to make him feel bad? However! Ark was a user who wasn't swayed by tears.

Susak! Susak! Susak!

Ark closed his eyes tightly and started to dismantle the slimes. Then Ark was astonished. Once the lightsaber sliced through the jelly, guts and blood started spilling out.

The bloody smell that hit his nose! The bright atmosphere was like an 80's RPG but it was 100% realistic! A gag? Was this a gag? If there was a manufacturer then he would like to ask them that question.

–Huk! Hyung-nim has really become a warrior. In the old days you couldn't even kill one bug but now you can kill something this cute without hesitation. Hyung-nim's growth is impressive! Now I can relax and close my eyes.

Basak started making noise like there was going to be a long separation.

Ark wandered if he should continue slaughtering the slimes. But it had already begun. It was impossible for Ark to abandon it so the only way was to advance!

‘One cannot live without the sacrifice of animals. It is hypocritical to hesitate when I eat pork and beef! The slimes are just like killing a cow or pig!’

Susak! Susak! Susak! Susak! Susak! Susak!

Ark thoroughly dismantled the slimes. He slaughtered 10 slimes and received 10 Soul as a reward. He had a lot of thoughts.

‘That means I need to complete it 50 times in order to buy one orb?’

He became dark once he confirmed the compensation. However, the item had the same effect as an extra life.

‘This time it took 10 minutes. But I also forgot the time and carried on a dialog with Basak. Once I catch them then they can be dismantled in an instant. If I know the trick then the time to catch them can be reduced in half. No, it will take 2~3 minutes to finish

one quest. Therefore, I can collect 500 Soul in approximately 2~3 hours. 2~3 hours isn't that damaging!'

Ark patiently continued cutting the slimes.

After 1 hour and 30 minutes. It was a repetitive task but each quest took 3~4 minutes to finish and he completed it 26 times. He had earned 260 Soul. And he repeatedly went to the farm owner after finishing the quest in order to claim the reward.

–Ohh! Already? Keep holding them. The explosion of slime meat!

The farm owner laughed at the pitiful slimes. Then he suddenly stiffened. He turned pale in fear and stuttered as he retreated.

–D-dark...the darkness....it is coming....

"Darkness?"

Ark turned around with an uncomfortable expression.

And a situation where darkness was pressing against the outskirts of the farm caught his eye. But day changed into night due to the orbit of the plane around the sun so it wasn't a big deal.

"That is just darkness...."

Ark said as he turned back to look at the farm owner.

However, the farm owner's body suddenly changed into white smoke and disappeared? He wasn't the only one. The farm, slime and other residents of the village also disappeared. It seemed like the effect of Hajaska had worn off but he checked and there was still 30 minutes remaining.

"What the hell? Was there a time limit attached?"

–Hyung-nim, over there!

Basak shouted as he pointed to the rear.

This was a small planet with a fast rotation which was why it seemed like the darkness was quickly encroaching on the farm. But there was something approaching with the darkness.

No, to be precise there was something within the darkness. A bizarre tangle of monsters that formed one body.

Space 05: 1 Hour 45 Minutes

Rattle.

The cafe doors opened and a young man entered. He stood at the entrance for a moment as he looked around at the tables.

He looked like a person meeting someone for the first time. But the person wasn't hard to find. It was a weekday afternoon so there weren't a lot of guests and the person looked exactly like he did in Galaxian.

The man headed towards him without hesitation.

"Valencia?"

Another young man looked back.

"Is that what you want me to call you? I...."

"....Hawk."

The man replied in a curt voice.

The young man sitting in the chair was the Galaxian user known as Valencia. And the person sitting on the other side was Hawk. In reality he wasn't a special youth but in Galaxian he was a member of the Seven Swords.

These two people were sitting down facing each other in real life.

"Why did you request a meeting?"

"You don't know? Don't we have a common interest?"

"I don't know what you're saying."

"Have you abandoned getting revenge on Ark?"

Hawk spoke with a mild voice.

"I've had my subordinates track your behaviour. Ever since Ark defeated you on Impeltus, you've been wandering around catching monsters. You were hired as mercenaries a few times but other than that, you didn't meet any other users. So I thought you were trying to forget about Ark in the game...."

Hawk's eyes shifted towards the seat next to Valencia. A black uniform was placed next to Valencia. Hawk laughed and nodded.

"I'm relieved that you're not someone like that."

"Did you come just to say that?"

“I came to grasp your hand.”

Valencia started feeling unpleasant after hearing Hawk talk.

“Do you think I would come here knowing nothing? When you started the team quest, you clearly promised Ark to me on Tatuine. Yes, that promise was kept. But you also sold information to the party of the Red Slaughterer. That means you didn’t believe in me from the beginning. Yet now you came for my help?”

“Based on the result, my choice wasn’t wrong. Didn’t the Red Slaughterer appear after you were already defeated by Ark? Am I wrong?”

“Is that a problem?”

“No, it isn’t a problem.”

Hawk said with a resolute expression.

“I clearly told you in Tatuine. I will ally with you and Jyubel. Then I will separate Ark from the investigation team. My position is that it doesn’t matter who accomplishes my goal. I just chose the path with the highest probability of success.”

“But you still failed.”

Valencia openly laughed.

“I heard about it. In the end, Ark managed to snatch the best achievements in the investigation team. Your pride must be injured. You were the leader and still lost despite deliberately sabotaging Ark. So aren’t you filled with fear? Have you become scared of Ark?”

“I won’t deny it.”

“What?”

“I misjudged Ark’s skills. As you know, I am one of the leading forces in Galaxian. So I submitted to some bleeding because I can shatter Ark at any time. But the problem isn’t that simple. Now I can admit that it wasn’t just due to luck that he obtained the top seat in New World.”

“What? What did you just say? The top seat in New World? Then he really is that....”

“You didn’t know?”

Valencia’s face became blank at Hawk’s question.

Valencia had a gaming background so of course he knew the name Ark. The gaming legend Ark who removed countless powerful enemies and dominated New World!

But the place where Valencia first met Ark was on Beltana. At that time, he had been the leader of the soldiers and Ark was just a prisoner. The prisoners were used as shields on

the battlefield and starved to death if they couldn't eat. How could he think that Ark was the legendary gamer Ark? Valencia hadn't realized it at all.

"Is that true?" He really is that Ark?"

"It is true."

Hawk replied in a confident voice.

"I knew it from the beginning. And I thought I watched him sufficiently. But there seems to be a gap in my mindset. I thought that he was just lucky in New World. No, I wanted to believe that was the accurate representation. But now I won't make such a mistake. Now I won't submit to some bleeding but will bet everything into smashing Ark."

"So are you going to fight a war?"

"When the time comes."

"It is not time yet?"

"Then do you know a clear way to defeat him? I will only fight when I can win."

"Are you saying you have no confidence?"

"Even if I have confidence, there is no profit in fighting now."

Hawk folded his arms as he sat deeply in the chair and talked in a low voice.

"Ark now has a home base in the territory of the Galactic Federation. In this situation, the only opportunity to strike is when Ark moves to the frontier. There is no meaning if I try to kill Ark and fail. Ark's guard would just be up."

"That just means you can't damage Ark."

"That's right. There is a limit to the amount of forces I can bring into the Galactic Federation. It might be slow but Ark is bound to come out to the space frontier sometime. In Galaxian, a person is bound to head towards the frontier once they raise their power. The game is about the space frontier after all. So Ark's base will move from the Galactic Federation towards the frontier."

Then it would be war! However, it would be meaningless if he couldn't strike Ark with a single blow! Hawk was going to bet everything on that war.

Naturally Hawk wouldn't just sit back and wait until that time came. Hawk spoke like it was possible to win over Ark once the war started. He couldn't wait for such an opportunity to come. The chance wouldn't just come.

That was the reason Hawk visited Valencia.

"Until then I just need someone to watch Ark."

"Are you talking about me?"

“I’m going to give you the necessary support.”

Valencia didn’t answer.

Like Hawk guessed, Valencia still hadn’t forgotten his grudge against Ark. There was no need to speak about the reason why. The important issue was the benefits. His pride had been hurt. No, his pride had already been crushed. He came because he couldn’t give him his obsession.

But Valencia also knew. No matter how many times he swung his sword or cleared the monsters, there was no bridging the gap between him and Ark as time passed.

‘Especially if he is the Ark of New World....’

Right now he couldn’t single-handedly deal with Ark. Thus it was difficult for Valencia to shrug off Hawk’s temptation. But Valencia had no intention of being used as a tool and then thrown away. Hawk was hoping to be the one who killed Ark.

“I will end Ark with my own hands.”

“That is what I also wish for.”

A smile formed on Hawk’s face.

“There seems to be some misunderstanding. I’m not asking you to hand Ark over to me. Nor am I saying that you will be my subordinate. It is good if you can bring down Ark. No, I will give you as much support as possible so you can defeat Ark. Everything you obtain in the process will be your share.”

“So what will you gain?”

“I can get many things. My talk will end here for the moment. Now it is your turn to answer. Valencia, will you accept my suggestion?”

“I don’t have anything to lose.”

“That is the key.”

Hawk replied with a smile. Valencia looked at Hawk for a moment before nodding.

“Okay. I will receive your support. Just once. But don’t expect too much. Like I said, I think I am just being used by you. And I have no intention of making the same mistakes. I will only fight Ark if I am sure I can win. I won’t move according to your will.”

“I picked the right person.”

Hawk nodded and said.

“I know you won’t blindly follow. There is no need to rush. No, you shouldn’t rush. First raise your power enough that you can at least inflict a mortal wound.”

“No, I will stop his breath.”

Valencia emphasized as he grabbed his uniform.

Kwa kwak! Kwa kwak! Kwa kwak!

A black form went flying and was driven into the rock. One man threw his body away from it. The black form with red eyes moved around the man. The one trying to veer away from the black form was Ark!

“Defense Break!”

Ark’s legs moved like lightning.

There was a ringing sound as he struck the defense pose and the black form stumbled back. The dent that Ark had made in the black shape was already gone. And a white light quickly emerged from his sword!

“Khafra Fencing 3rd style! Galaxy Sword! Time!”

The light changed into swords that spread out like a fan. And the swords formed a vortex that fiercely rotated around Ark. This was a variant of the Galaxy Sword! The black shape in the area was instantly shredded and disappeared.

However, there wasn’t only one.

Wuuuuuu! Wuuuuuu!

The blank space was filled with another black form like water collecting in a cup. Dozens of hooks flew towards him!

–*Blast!*

Basak’s- Bao- arms slammed into the ground. At the same time, sharp awls shot out from his head towards the black forms. The black forms were pushed back by the pressure. Ark ran between them.

“Basak, catch! I’m jumping off!”

Ark was grabbed by Basak who jumped down towards a large rock. 10 black forms shrieked and jumped down after him. And glanced around the ground with greasy eyes. Three or four spheres had fallen at their feet. They were grenades with the safety pins removed!

Pepepepeng! Pepepepeng! Pepepepeng!

There was an explosion and fire enveloped them. The black forms were shredded by the flames and heat. Ark then emerged from Basak’s arms where he had safely experienced the detonation and got on a disk. Ark had got on the air board, Super Board!

“Let’s penetrate a way through! Sonic Sword!”

-Ohhhhhh! Blast!

He used the Super Board to zoom through the rocky zone. The shape of the 10 black forms flew everywhere like they were bowling balls. Ark accelerated through them with Super Board. And he removed the safety pins with his mouth and dropped the grenade one by one.

Pepepepeng! Pepepepeng! Pepepepeng!

A trail of explosions followed the Super Board! The black forms were involved in the explosions one after another. After a while, 30 black shapes had disappeared but Ark didn't relax. There were still many of them remaining in the neighbourhood.

But the problem was that they weren't visible.

'Damn, there will definitely be a trap.'

Right now the black forms were gathering around Ark. They were the identity of the bizarre monsters that appeared in the darkness. Ark hadn't imagined that he would receive a surprise attack from the monsters so suddenly. Naturally he was surprised but he felt relieved after fighting them once.

There were many of them called Dreg but their level was at least 70~80. They were half Ark's level so he didn't need to exert himself. Of course, the battle was one-sided. It was possible to slaughter most of them. However, it didn't take long to discover that the situation wasn't as simple as it seemed. They came non-stop no matter how many were killed.

Infinite proliferation! That was the scary part. They came constantly pouring like ants towards honey. There were two ways to deal with bastards like this. Fight until death or....

Tong!

The Super Board suddenly stopped. One of the Dregs had grabbed the Super Board with a hook. Ark and Basak flew forward due to the sudden stop. Ark quickly got up and swung the Equalizer.

Wiing! Wiing! Buuuuung! Wiing!

The white light cut off the black hook. However, it was impossible for Ark to cut all the hooks heading towards him. Several hooks scratched his body and sucked out his health. The monsters' attacks only dealt 60~70 damage but the combined attacks rapidly reduced his health.

'Only a bit more to go. Just a little bit more! More....'

He shouldn't be having miscellaneous thoughts while surrounded by enemies. The only thought in his head should be survival! He just needed the will to live.

Ark penetrated through the siege with Basak and ran towards some hard rocks. And stuck his back to the wall and swung his sword relentlessly. A large number of Dregs died as Ark became covered with wounds. While he was in a trance from the fierce battle.

-Hyung-nim, it has come!

Ark then noticed something. And a light of hope filled Ark's eyes as he lifted his head. A wave of light was quickly approaching the village! The planet had rotated and the light of dawn had come. This was the only way he could survive!

Wuuuuuu! Wuuuuuu!

The Dreg shrieked as the light approached and dispersed in every direction. However, they couldn't avoid the light. In the end, they were engulfed in light and disappeared like sand. Hundreds of Dregs disappeared in a matter of seconds. Ark flopped down on the ground as he took a break.

"Pant pant pant! I also survived this time!"

This time too!

That's right. This wasn't the first time Ark fought with the Dregs. Ark was slaughtering the slimes for the quest with Basak when the surprise attack happened. Ark had been on the verge of death many times. He managed to survive and steadily raised his level and gained items.

'It is fortunate that I packed generous supplies before leaving the Silver Star.'

Ark had packed many things before signing a contract with Berami. If he hadn't prepared recovery ampoules and grenades then the Dregs would've already killed him. It once again highlighted how important preparation was. And he discovered this planet wasn't as safe as he thought.

'But.....'

Ark's spirit wasn't normal.

'I've already earned 260 Soul from the part time job. I can't give up now. Based on my experience, the planet's rotation period was 3 hours and 30 minutes. Day and night changed every 1 hour and 45 minutes. And at night the Dregs came out. Soul City is a place that exists in the daytime.'

After daylight came back. Soul City was reappear once he used Hajaska. There was on strange point. Once they appeared again, the store owner and farm owner didn't recognize Ark. However, the orbs were still being sold at the store.

So Ark thought about it.

‘Now I’ve gotten the hang of butchering the slimes so I can gather the remaining 240 Souls in 1 hour. That leaves 45 minutes before it becomes night. It is enough time to obtain the key from the village!’

And he started butchering the slimes again. As expected, Ark was able to make 500 Souls after 1 hour.

-<Life Orb> has been bought.

And he finally obtained the Life Orb!

‘Health is important when fighting strong enemies. If I have a chance then I would also like to buy the mana orb....’

But he needed to struggle for another 1 hour and 45 minutes when night came again. He had gained quite a lot of recovery ampoules when protecting Kuhwen. He used at least 3 recovery ampoules in the last battle. He also three at least 7 grenades in the crisis.

‘I have to waste at least two nights to earn 500 Souls again. If I have to use that many recovery ampoules and grenades every time then it won’t be profitable.’

He had no confidence about surviving the next time. Therefore Ark decided to just find a way to enter the building and obtain the Divine Artefact. It was at that point when Ark’s calculations went awry.

-You came to visit the village mayor? Ah, I knew something was wrong. It certainly is true that I am the mayor. But now I am too old. My memory isn’t the best. So I offered the spot of village mayor to the owner of the warehouse. There is a box that was handed down through generations of mayors. I heard that a man sealed a building the centre of the village a long time ago and left a box for someone to come find it. If you want to know how to open the building then visit the warehouse manager.

The signs weren’t good. But at this point he still didn’t care.

–Warehouse? There was a warehouse in our village? No, I think there is. Where was it?

–Hey, what are you doing at a person’s home? What? Is this the village’s warehouse? You, are you trying to pick a fight? Even if I didn’t clean up, how can you treat this house as a warehouse? The warehouse is on the other side.

–This is the post office. Although letters don’t come here. The warehouse is next door.

The words of the damn NPC kept on leading him in circles! Anyway, Ark finally found the warehouse. But the situation didn’t end there.

–Hey, get out of the way! I’m busy! I need to organize this warehouse by the end of the day! I don’t have time to talk! If you want to ask something then help me put the warehouse in order!

The middle aged man shouted as he carried boxes.

<Warehouse Clean-up>

You have found the mayor of Soul City at the warehouse.

However, the warehouse keeper is very busy and can't talk. Clean up the warehouse before conversing with him.

Difficulty: –

And the information window that rose! It was a quest so he had no other choice. In the end, Ark was forced to carry the boxes and clean up the warehouse.

In fact, it actually wasn't that easy. The size and appearance of the boxes were different and not all of them would go into the warehouse. It was like starting a tetris game from scratch. Thanks to that, both his body and head were hurting by the time it was sunset.

-Darkness! The darkness is coming!

“.....Dammit!”

That was Ark's second night.

It wasn't as difficult as the first night since he had experienced it before. He had become used to the Dregs' attack pattern to a certain extent so he focused and killed all the enemies within 1 hour and 45 minutes. Thanks to that, he only needed to use 2 recovery ampoules and 4 grenades.

“But this time it is really the end!”

Ark went straight to the warehouse once it became daytime. It was then that he learnt the huge twist.

-Mayor? The mayor lives in the rundown house on the outskirts of the village. Or maybe not.

“Huh? But yesterday I met him and he told me that he passed the position to you? Didn't you also see me yesterday?”

–I don't know anything about that.

The warehouse keeper just repeated the same things. Then Ark remembered how the NPCs didn't remember him after the first night. This meant that the NPCs' memories were reset!

It wasn't only the memories of the NPCs. The situation that Ark had advanced in was also reset. Even though Ark knew the previous situation, he had to hear the same words while repeating the steps. It really was like the 2D NPCs wandering around in the 80's RPGs.

In the end, Ark had no choice but to visit the village mayor again. And he once again received the warehouse quest. The quest wasn't easy even if he had done it before. But he knew the tricks and was able to clean the warehouse in 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Now he could talk to the warehouse keeper.

–Ohh! I never thought I would finish this by the end of the day. This is all thanks to you. Yes, did you need something from me? What is it?

“I heard that you inherited the village mayor position from the old man living on the outskirts. Didn't you also receive a box that contained a way to enter the building in the centre of the village?”

–What? You are asking about that? Right. The previous village mayor offered the position to me. But as you can see, I am very busy. It doesn't make sense to take the position so I transferred it to someone else. The auntie keeping the boutique shop in the village centre.

He really had to go all over the place. The damn village mayor....

However! Once again, Ark had no choice.

And when he visited the NPC that owned the boutique store. The auntie who was the owner was grabbing her head and shrieking.

–Just leave me alone! I am sensitive right now! My needles have dropped into a sandbox! I need to find it before the day ends! So I don't want to hear anything! Damn, if you have something to say to me then find my needle!

<Find Needles in a Sandbox>

The warehouse keeper was too busy and gave the position of village mayor to the boutique owner. However, the boutique owner is now going insane because her needles dropped into a sandbox.

Find the needles if you want to request something from her.

<Needles Found: 0/12>

Difficulty: –

An information window popped up as the auntie yelled hysterically. He didn't question it any longer. He just grinded his teeth and found 9 needles before it became the 3rd night.

And now....

“I will bring it to an end this time!”

Ark got up after recalling his memories. If he didn't resolve everything in the daytime then he would need to start the quest again. In other words, this was the time to fight!

“Super Board! Come out, Shire! Rune Carving, Hajaska!”

Ark climbed on the Super Board before using Hajaska. And he headed straight to the old man’s house once the NPCs appeared.

-Mayor? I have already given the position...

“You gave it to the warehouse keeper? I understand! Goodbye!”

He skipped most of the words!

-Hey, get out of the way! I’m busy! I need to organize this warehouse by the end of the day!

“I’m happy to help! Basak, move the boxes to the entrance! I will arrange the warehouse!”

Ark jumped down from the Super Board after flying into the warehouse. The warehouse arrangement was still complex but he had already done it once. He used his memories to pile up the boxes. And he skipped the warehouse keeper’s lines. He had already visited the boutique owner so his mental process omitted her words!

-Just leave me alone! I am sensitive right now!

“Your needles dropped in the sand? I understand! I’ll find it!”

He instantly rushed into the sandbox! He shovelled like crazy and found a needle. Fortunately Soul City was like a 16 bit video game. The position of the warehouse boxes and the needles were still the same.

Thus he completed the needle search quest. But it was different from his expectations. No, he had already guessed to some extent....

-Hohoho! Thanks for finding my needles. I can now start working again. But what did you need me for? Mayor? Ah, that. The warehouse keeper asked me but how can a female become the village mayor? So I gave it to that guy called Hanson. It seemed like he would have to do this for a few months. This was an annoying place.

They kept on giving it up. Was the mayor position some type of bomb? In the end, the selfish NPC asked Ark to find a man called Hanson. In desperation, he entered the building and asked about the village major.

-Yes, I am the village mayor. And I also received the box.

“Huh? R-really?”

He finally heard a positive reply! Could he finally walk away from the repetitive quests? Ark asked as his heart pounded with desperation and anticipation.

“Can I see that box?”

–Well, it isn't that difficult but....there is a problem right now. Actually, I've been absent from work for a few months. The cost of living went up and I borrowed 200 Soul. This box might be given to me after accepting the position of village mayor but you need Soul to borrow it. So I won't show the box unless I'm given 200 Soul.

And a quest information window rose up.

<Pay the Loan>

You have finally found the village mayor Hanson. But Hanson won't show you the box unless he is given 200 Soul. Hanson suffered difficulties for several months and couldn't save up that money. The only possible path is to obtain 200 Soul. Soul will be available from part time jobs in the village.

Difficulty: –

“Shit....”

-Shit....

This damn Soul City! A place he didn't want to return to again.

Ping! Ping! Ping!

Bullets hit a rock and turned it into powder. One man was inserting bullets into a pistol.

“Dammit!”

The man complaining was Rapid. Once again, a few days Ark had incited Rapid into developing the investment fund for the planet. Rapid hadn't thought that the problem was that serious at the time. Galaxian was a game after all. And like Ark kept on mentioning, Rapid had graduated from K University with a business degree.

‘Releasing a rough plan should be plausible.’

However, it wasn't that simple once he actually begun. Once he started, there wasn't just 1~2 details that he needed to pay attention to. An real life investment fund couldn't be applied to a system like Galaxian. It needed to be transformed to fit into Galaxian's economic system. Rapid's disposition also played a part.

‘I'm not like other people. It doesn't matter if I didn't start it in the first place but now that I have, my ego won't let me fail. No, I have pride but there is also that Ark bastard. He would continue questioning if my K University business degree is fake and if I got into the school using my father's money. I would rather throw away my diploma then hear Ark continue talking!’

So he stayed up all night for a couple of days.

–It is wonderful but you shouldn't overwork. You are indeed my son.

He even received the encouragement of his friend for some reason. In the end, Rapid searched through various books and formed an investment fund. He imagined a situation where Ark sighed with admiration as he accessed the game.

“Ooh! Rapid-nim, I’ve been waiting for you!”

Bain who was in charge of S-20 jumped out.

“Me? Why?”

“There are more complaints.”

“Complaints?”

“Yes, a complaint came in not long ago. A bandit group is taking action against the merchants moving in and out of S-20. And now a few of them are stranded in the Outlands while being attacked by thieves.”

Therefore Bain and Asuran dispatched their followers. But the power of the thieves were stronger than expected. The guards mostly stopped the merchants’ carriages from being destroyed but the robbers blocked them and they were also stranded.

“The atmosphere of the sector really isn’t a joke. All the merchants in the sector is paying attention to this event. If any of the merchants’ carriages are destroyed then the credit rating of the sector will fall to the bottom!”

Rapid grasped the situation. Managing a sector wasn’t a superficial thing. The higher the reputation and financial of the sector, the more complaints would occur. As the guards’ level increased, some complaints were easily solved. But occasionally a situation with a great degree of difficulty would occur. Only the owner or the main force of the sector could deal with those complaints.

However, Ark had gone out to the universe to find the Divine Artefact. The main forces of S-20, the Royal Guards had been commissioned by the Silver Hand. And.....

“I understand what you’re saying. But why are you telling me?”

“Isn’t Rapid-nim the director in charge of handling complaints?”

“What?”

Rapid had been given the position without knowing.

“What does that mean? Why am I in charge of the Complaints Division?”

“Ark-nim appointed Rapid-nim as the Chief Director before he left. He said that Rapid-nim has a strong sense of responsibility and will take care of any trouble. He emphasized many times that you are a man who won’t neglect a mission.”

“That bastard....”

Rapid's face crumbled like a piece of toilet paper. Ark's ulterior motive was obvious. Rapid was going to stay in S-20 for a while so Ark intended to leave the troublesome problems to him.

Rapid couldn't say anything. He would've never accepted. Instead Ark made Bain praise Rapid so many times that he couldn't ignore it.

He really was cunning. However, Rapid wasn't angry at Ark. No, to be exact he had completely grasped Ark's character.

"Dammit! Why? It is bad enough that I was yanking my head making the investment fund for that Ark bastard!"

Unfortunately.

Right now Rapid was at the blockage. And he was firing at the thieves from behind a rock. It was like Ark expected. Bain was sending Rapid a look that showed absolute trust in him. Rapid wasn't a villain. He was irritated at Ark but it couldn't be helped.

'Dammit, if he hadn't given me this pistol then I wouldn't have bothered!'

Ark had handed him the 'Devil Sealed Gun' in exchange for establishing the investment funds. In fact, one of the reasons why Rapid accepted the complaint was to test out this pistol.

The result was that the gun's performance was satisfactory. The damage and hit rate was 1.2~1.3 times better than his previous weapon. However, the pistol has a serious problem.

Tang!

—Ohh! It hit! It hit! Hehehe, how is it? Spectacular?

Tang!

—Heh, that is another life gone. Just seeing it is understandable. You are a person like me. It might be hypocritical but you are someone who can't live without seeing blood. So toss away your hypocrisy and kill! Widows! Mass produced orphans! Hehehe!

The Devil Sealed Pistol.

There was a real devil sealed in the pistol. And it started making noise every time the gun was shot. He felt like he was developing schizophrenia the longer the intense firefight lasted.

"You'll see soon, Ark! I won't leave it alone when you return this time!"

Rapid growled out angrily.

"What's wrong with that? Sometimes you should loosen your body."

The person avoiding the hail of bullets next to Rapid was Kaya. In fact, Kaya was someone that Alan found difficult to understand. Everyone in the investigation team had scattered after returning to S-20 but Kaya had remained.

However, she didn't seem to have any business in S-20. She just stayed near the management office where Bain was. However, she came along as a mercenary once Rapid received the request.

Rapid looked at Kaya and said.

"I'm thankful for your help but don't say unnecessary things. I know you are familiar with Ark but I don't care. You will only receive damage if you stay on Ark's side."

"You believe that I'm on Ark's side?"

"Aren't you? There is no other reason for hanging around the management office."

"Don't make me laugh! Ark...."

"It doesn't matter. I'm not interested so there is no need to be sensitive."

"What?"

Kaya frowned. She stared at Rapid for a moment before shouting angrily.

"Aha! Is that so? A person who graduated from K University has no interest in the lives of ordinary people. Yes, you are excellent. Your biceps are thick. So what? You might have a good life but you are a dull bastard! Hey, take this. What? Why are you shooting at me? Damn bastards! Everyone turn into a dog!"

She ran into enemy lines and started randomly firing skills. Rapid's face became bemused at Kaya's strange behaviour.

-A stupid bastard who didn't even notice....

The voice from the pistol murmured with a sigh.

On the one hand, back in Soul City.

-....Hyung-nim.

"Do not say anything."

Ark said stiffly.

Some time ago, Ark had met Hanson who finally had the box for the quest.

Raising 200 Soul! Ark felt like exploding at that moment.

He had killed slimes in order to gain 500 Soul and buy a Life Orb. But now he had to do the quest again to gain 200 Soul.

‘If it wasn’t for the Divine Artefact! If it wasn’t for the Divine Artefact! If it wasn’t for the Divine Artefact!’

He wanted to hit someone over this quest. However, he wasn’t a user who would give up on a quest.

“I’ll do it! I gathered 500 Soul already so what is 200 Soul? I will complete this!”

Ark once again wielded his lightsaber to slice up the slimes. And after the 4th night. He was sick of fighting the Dregs.

-Your level has risen!

He killed countless level 70~80 monsters so his level had increased by 2. It meant he had killed countless enemies. Of course, he almost died many times. In the meantime, he had used 11 recovery ampoules and 20 grenades.

‘But this is really the last time!’

14 hours had passed since he entered the ghost planet.

However, Ark couldn’t close his eyes for even 1 minute and his spirit felt like he was flying to Andromeda if he had to welcomed a 5th night. That’s why he raced away on the Super Board as soon as day broke.

He instantly sliced 200 Soul and gave them to Hanson. And he finally got his hands on the box!

However, the contents of the box caused Ark’s mood to drop to the bottom. It wasn’t because the contents he desired wasn’t in the box. Elderly people. The way to open the door of the building was recorded inside the box.

A phrase written in the language of magic was recorded on the scroll!

–*Open sesame!*

–....*Excuse me, Hyung-nim.*

“Don’t say anything.”

He finally figured out the way to enter the building. Yet why was it like this? Damn 80’s RPGs!

Space 06: The Third Divine Artefact. And?

“It really opened.”

Ark muttered in a low voice.

The thick iron doors in front of him had split in half. He was standing in front of the building in the centre of Soul City and the doors immediately opened as soon as he said ‘Open Sesame.’ Well he found the answer but....what the hell, something like this....

Ark made a bemused expression for a while before shaking his head.

‘No, I should stop thinking like this. The important thing is that I found the answer. And it isn’t finished yet. And there is no guarantee this building will be safe. This isn’t the time to be discouraged. Let’s relax.’

Ark took a deep breath. And he slowly entered the building.

Behind the door was a steep staircase leading down. The stairs were very long. He warily walked down the stairs but didn’t see anything for a while. He travelled hundreds of metres downwards on the seemingly never-ending stairs.

Pajajak.

He heard the sound of something crumbling at his feet.

‘What is this? Is it due to insects? If this is an insect’s fault then they need to be a considerable size....’

It was the same leather texture like a shed piece of skin. Ark continued descending until he reached the floor of the underground space. Thick cobwebs were stuck every 1 metre and large oval objects approximate 3~4 metres large were placed everywhere.

‘This looks like an alien’s hatchery.’

Soul City had the atmosphere of an 80’s RPG while the building was like a weird 80’s movie. Well, it didn’t matter right now.

Pajajak! Pajajak! Pajajak!

Ark looked around with a tense expression. The sound of someone continuously stepping on leather could be heard. Ark reflexively grabbed his sword and swung around. However, the only one who caught his eye was Basak.

Ark shouted with a displeased expression.

“D-damn! You surprised me. What are you doing all of a sudden?”

–*Huh?* Ah no, there seems to be something there....

“Over there? Eh?”

He turned in the direction Basak pointed towards. Ark walked closer towards a stone statue that looked like a scarab. It also had cobwebs stuck to it but once he cleared it, the statue looked like a sarcophagus. It was common sense to open it when finding something like this in a dungeon!

Ark lifted the lid.

“Eh? P-perhaps this is?”

Ark’s eyes popped out with surprise. An item inside the sarcophagus!

They were glossy boots made of a polished, black shell. Ark sceptically picked up the boots and an information window popped up.

-Phantom Boots (Artefact)

Item Type: Light Armor (Shoes) Wearer Restriction: Elim’s Heir only

Defense: 70

Durability: 100/100

Thousands of years ago, the Murat created 5 Divine Artefacts for their Elim. This Divine Artefact is different from the others as it is made using the biological tissue of a strange organism. It is the biological tissue from the life form called Drone.

The Murat originally called the Drone ‘Scarabaeus.’ They prayed to this creature for ‘eternal life’ and were used to make protective amulets. The Scarabaeus that the Murat found in the past was a precursor to the creatures found in a space time gap. Since then, the Murat studied the creature and used them to make the Rama battle suits. In ancient times, Kuhwen who was the Horus of the Murat studied the Drones and made the Divine Artefact Phantom Boots.

The most surprising performance of the Phantom Boots is the technique called ‘Soul Sprint.’ When Soul Sprint is used, the space around the user will distort and evasion will increase by 50%.

<Agility +30, Intelligence +20, Movement Speed +20%>

Special Options (Soul Sprint): The surrounding space will distort and the body’s ability to evade attacks will increase by 50% for 20 minutes. However, this effect is only applied when moving (Force Consumption: 200 Cool down time: 1 hour>

-The Divine Artefact <Phantom Boots> has been acquired.

“It really is a Divine Artefact!”

He picked up the boots. He had struggled through Soul City but he didn’t expect that it would be this easy to acquire the boots.

That meant there was still something left. He was nervous since this was the 3rd Divine Artefact. It was unexpected but he had no intention of complaining.

Anyway, he had obtained the 3rd Divine Artefact! The performance of the Divine Artefact was also beyond expectations. The basic options already increased Agility by 30, Intelligence by 20 and movement speed by 20%. This was already the best options attached to footwear and there was also the additional option.

It was unnecessary to explain to people used to playing games. Options that increased speed was considered the best for footwear. Those that increased it by 10~15% could be sold for at least 1,000 gold!

However, the Phantom Boots had 20% attached. The special option Soul Sprint also increased his evasion rate by 50%.

“This is the best Divine Artefact I’ve received so far!”

Ark was so excited that his saliva was dripping out.

–Hyung-nim, there is something else here.

“What?”

Now Ark could see a memory chip. It was a memory chip in the shape of a small, circular bar.

Ark knew the purpose of the memory chip. The memory chip could be used with the Elim’s Helmet that he obtained from the training centre. Not surprisingly, letters floated in front of him after the memory chip was loaded.

–How wonderful, my heir.

The road to reach here wouldn’t have been easy.

This is an unknown space that is confidential even among the Murat. The reason is that it is a relic of a previous era.

In fact, this planet was discovered hundreds of years ago.

But it was treated as a mirage and no one could enter for hundreds of years.

The truth of this planet only recently became clear. The Murat built a research laboratory near the planet and studied the mirage until they could figure it out. And using particle conversion technology, they were able to move to this planet.

This is the transmission system inside the pyramid that you used.

The reason I came here is because it is a relic of a previous era.

According to the data of the Murat that surveyed the planet, a completely different type of galaxy used to exist it was caught in a space and time rift due to some incident and only the soul form is left.

The present galaxy is going through several different disputes. I don't know when the conflict will end. So I came here first. The remnants of a galaxy has already disappeared. I came to this planet to discover why the previous era perished.

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to achieve it.

"I guess so."

Ark bit his lips. The NPCs in Soul City have their brains reset after one day. What could be figured out from those NPCs? Perhaps Xanax also experienced the same thing.

"Anyway, this is from an old age. It is a planet that existed in a previous galaxy? No, Soul City clearly has the atmosphere of a previous time."

NPCs that only repeated the same words. Residents with heads double the size of their bodies.

He didn't know about a different galaxy but they were definitely from a former era. Before virtual reality games emerged, they were like RPGs released on consoles like PlayStation or Super Nintendo. When thinking like that, it was certain this world was from a previous time....

"It is a serious situation but this is an absurd setting."

He couldn't say otherwise. Anyway, the message continued.

The reason I left the Divine Artefact in this place is so that you will know of its existence. But that isn't the only reason.

The Murat discovered an unknown new creature on this planet.

The Murat found an insect similar to the Scarabaeus that has the ability to move freely through space. And this creature has the ability to react to mana like a parasite but it has the characteristic of doubling the body's ability to absorb mana.

The Murat called this creature 'Drone' and created several types of freely attachable armour from it.

The Murat generously bestowed this Drone technology to the species that follow them. The Murat didn't think the Rama would use this technology to betray them....

Of course, the Murat's Drone technology is several generations ahead of other species.

I already knew about the technology and data before the Murat were destroyed. And the current Murat is destroyed. I travelled here in order to upgrade the performance of my equipment for my trip. However, I discovered too much time is required after coming here.

Perhaps decades.

Unfortunately, I don't have time to wait until then.

So I decided to leave it for you.

‘This is the part connected to the explanation in the Phantom Boots’ information window!’

The Murat found a species on this planet. This was why the Rama made the battle suits from the Drones. It was why Xanax came to this planet. Before the Murat perished, they used the Drones to develop a new type of battle suit and Xanax came here to complete it. But he gave up due to the time required. He left it to his heir to one day finish.

‘Then there is a way to somehow upgrade my battle suit around here?’

Ark thought up to there.

Kung! Pajajajak!

There was the sound of something stepping on the ground again.

“Dammit! Basak, can’t you move a little more quietly?”

–Huh? I am here?

Basak’s voice was heard from close to him.

“Eh? What? Huh? Then that sound just now....”

Ark felt an ominous feeling as he slowly turned around.

“Not yet?”

“Damn, there are so many!”

A long passage stretched out in front of them.

A hamster and a human were gathered in front of a wall with a gear. Not long after the earthquake took place, the octopuses discovered a passage in the area where they were working and told Milan and Tori.

Tori and Milan then went on an adventure! Like Tori discovered when he unknowingly stepped foot in there, the passage was full of traps. Traps would fly whenever they stepped on a switch hidden in the floor. Sometimes spears would abruptly fall from the ceiling.

However, they didn’t give up.

“Damn! It is dangerous. Dangerous!”

Tori cried out fearfully every time a trap was operated.

“How can we just go back after receiving this opportunity? Do you think an opportunity like this is common? Besides, Hyung-nim is still sleeping. Obviously he must be overworked. Then shouldn't we take care of this?”

“Something like this? Life is dangerous!”

“You don't need to worry about it. Didn't I tell you? I don't have a lot of chances this day but I am a Treasure Hunter. This sort of thing is originally my expertise. I am more of an expert in traps in ancient ruins than Hyung-nim is. We should continue onwards while waiting for Hyung-nim to wake up.”

“Then you go by yourself!”

“It will be difficult for you to leave.”

“Is that why I have to risk my life?”

“Hey, you don't need to worry so much. And we might even find treasures. Isn't that worth it? The two of us will thoroughly search for it. Then the other people won't treat you the same. No, there might be respect in their eyes.”

“E-eyes of respect?”

“Yes, so you should believe in this Milan who is called the Indiana Jones of space.”

“Who is Indiana Jones?”

“I am such a person.”

Milan didn't persist in this. And Tori was a hamster so his ears were thin.

Thanks to the traps, they were stuck in the passage for 16 hours.

Milan didn't show frustration as he dismantled the traps and reached the end of the passage. However, the end wasn't just another wall. Situated at the end of the passage was an elevator.

“The door isn't opening?”

“Sheesh, it can't be helped. Hey, get out of the way.”

Tori pushed Milan and connected his Nymphe to the elevator.

The combination of Milan and Tori was a surprisingly good fit. Milan was a Treasure Hunter who specialized in dismantling traps in ruins. And Tori was an expert in machines and hacking. The combination of ancient and modern technology wasn't a problem for them. This was the reason Ark had Milan and Tori accompany him on adventures.

Anyway!

“Heh, this is no big deal. That's it!”

Tori laughed and raised his body. The firmly closed elevator doors opened.

“Ohh, that’s it, that’s it. Tori, you’re not ordinary either.”

“Sheesh, you only realise that now? Life has become messy since working for Hyung-nim but I am still a hamster of the galaxy. Hey, are you listening? Eh? Why are you pressing the button? Hey, you! My mind isn’t prepared yet! No, I don’t want to enter! Ya! Dammit!”

Milan pushed the yelling Tori into the elevator and pressed the button.

At the same time, the elevator descended to an unknown place! And the doors opened once again.

Tori looked uneasily at Milan’s back. And his mouth opened absent-mindedly as he stepped out of the elevator and saw his surroundings.

“T-this place....!”

Kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

There was a chain of explosions and smoke soared. A man rolled through the smoke. Then three or four tentacles flew out of the darkness towards the man.

“Damn!”

The man cursed as he turned his body. A white light rotated and cut off the strands of tentacles. The man taking a fighting stance was none other than Ark.

“Pant pant pant! What is this?”

Ark breathed harshly as he looked in front of him.

Hazy smoke was flowing around a black crustacean. The crustacean seemed to be the same material that the Hyper Drone was made out of. However, the thing wasn’t wearing a battle suit like Ark.

The shell was just the upper body armour. The thing that attacked Ark just now was covered in the black shell.

-The Elite grade monster ‘Reject’ has appeared.

The fellow had appeared when Ark turned his head at the sound.

‘Dammit! I knew it! I knew it!’

Ark immediately understood the situation. The Divine Artefact wasn’t going to be just given to him. It wasn’t surprising that a boss monster was hiding.

But Ark wasn't worried about it. He was slightly surprised when it appeared but he judged it wouldn't be that difficult.

High position monster. If it was a boss level monster then the ranking would have Titan attached to it. This meant that a Titan class monster had the attack power of a boss monster.

Reject had an Elite rating. This meant that it was slightly stronger than a general monster.

Of course, the level wasn't visible so he couldn't be careless. However, an average region existed in a game. A level 200~300 boss monster wouldn't suddenly appear in a level 50 area. The highest possible level was 80~100?

'If I use such a formula....'

The Dregs that appeared at night was level 70~80. So Reject would be between level 120~140.

'Looking at it now, it is fortunate that I participated in the investigation team instead of coming here straight after finding the Baius Shield. I wouldn't have been able to endure the Dregs if my level and equipment is the same as then. But my level increased due to the investigation team so I could withstand the Dregs' attacks. When comparing it, this ghost planet has been easier.'

As expected, a boss appeared in front of him!

"Bring it on!"

Ark pulled out the Equalizer with a confident look.

Pushu syu syu! Syu syu syu!

The black shell floating in the air split from side to side. And 10 small missiles started pouring out? No, the shells that fell to the ground resembled insects. But their strength was the same as a missile.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

1 shell had the same destructive power as a grenade! And they didn't have metallic bodies so Sword Defense didn't work. To make matters worse, they had a homing function so he couldn't use normal movements to evade it. But this was Ark!

'Yes, it was something like this. If this is my opponent....'

He wasn't aware of the opponent's style so he received injuries from the first bombardment! Ark could find a way to deal with it.

"Phantom Boots! Soul Sprint!"

Pushu syu syu! Syu syu syu!

Then 10 shells flew towards Ark again. But this time the situation was different from before. Once he used the skill and moved his feet, his body was enveloped in a transparent air current. Even if he was hit by unavoidable shells, they just passed through his body and exploded.

This was due to the 50% evasion ability of Soul Sprint!

‘I knew this skill was worth it but I never expected the effect to be this much!’

A powerful item always pleased a user! Thanks to that, Ark’s fighting spirit rose and he shouted.

“Basak, return to a shield!”

–Yes, *Hyung-nim*!

Basak turned into a liquid and wound around Ark’s arms. The golem state was useful when dealing with weak monsters but it was too low level to take care of a boss monster. Using a shield was more profitable for fending off the shells.

“That’s it! The preparations are complete! Baius Shield!”

Ark opened the shield and rushed towards Reject. The Reject fired 10 shells again but he just penetrated through it with Soul Sprint. Thanks to his increased evasion and the Baius Shield, it wasn’t difficult to thwart the many shells. And he arrived in front of the Reject!

“It is my turn now! Khafra Fencing 3rd style! Galaxy Sword!”

Dozens of swords swirled around the Reject. Ark thought that blow was a chance to win.

But shortly after that. The black shell that was split apart joined together again. And a few tentacles extended out! The tentacles hit the shield and Ark was pushed back 10 metres. Then 10 shells flew towards him again.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang! Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The effect of Soul Sprint was only applied when moving. The bombardment immediately sucked out a lot of health. But Ark wasn’t puzzled about his own health.

“I-it’s health didn’t even decrease by 1%?”

The Reject that split apart still had full health!

This situation continued to repeat. He avoided the shells and rushed many times but kept being struck by tentacles. The tentacles would counterattack straight away. Meanwhile, Ark’s health steadily reduced to 30%.

‘Dammit, I only have one recovery ampoule left after the fight against the Dregs....it is also only recover 500 health at most. The degree of bombardment is enough to blow away one room. In this context, the Life Orb won’t mean much.’

However, he couldn't use the Life Orb. He had worked for 3 hours killing the Slimes in order to buy the recovery item. In the meantime, he encountered night time twice so the total time was actually 7 hours. How could he use such an item after only one day?

His attacks weren't connecting so he concentrated on avoidance and healing himself with the Charenjok's token. His health kept on decreasing due to the shells bombardment.

'And the situation won't become better even if I use the Life Orb. Even if my health recovers to 100%, it isn't possible to win if I can't deal damage. Plus....'

Ark breathed harshly as he looked at the message on the upper right hand corner.

-Applied Skill: (Soul Sprint) Remaining Time 5 minutes and 23 seconds.....

It had already been 15 minutes since the battle started. He used Soul Sprint but couldn't properly attack. Now he only had 5 minutes left of Soul Sprint.

Once Soul Sprint was released then the damage he received would double. Even if his health recovered 100% due to the Life Orb, he wouldn't last 10 minutes in that state.

'I have to find a way to cause damage before that!'

An invincible monster didn't exist. There had to be a way to damage it. It would be meaningless to have recovery ampoules and Life Orbs if he didn't find a way.

He used every method within the last 15 minutes but it was ineffective. From Ark's point of view, everything was useless. Of course, he could use a grenade explosion but there was no guarantee it would cause damage.

It was like this planet, the Ghost Star Rock.

"....Ghost planet?"

Ark raised his head and murmured.

'Wait? Shouldn't it be relevant to the ghost planet? It is an older world where spirits existed. If I hadn't used the Hajaska rune on Inquiry then I wouldn't have been able to come here or see the Dregs. Yes, when fighting the Dregs....'

When fighting the Dregs, the effect of Hajaska had disappeared. Then Ark couldn't properly verify the form of the Dregs. He just received the feeling of a huge, dark cloud.

Despite that, he still received damage from everywhere and almost died. So he paid attention after that but the Hajaska rune had disappeared before he found the Divine Artefact.

'Perhaps....'

"Come out, Shire! Rune Carving, Hajaska!"

Ark came up with the idea of using the Hajaska rune. He avoided the tentacles and checked Reject but no special changes could be seen.

‘Damn, is this not it? No, not yet. It is too early to jump to conclusions. I don’t have a lot of time now. And there is no other way. I just have to see it through to the end!’

Pushu syu syu! Syu syu syu!

“Soul Sprint!”

Ark sprinted through the storm of shells.

And he pulled out the remaining grenades from his backpack before throwing it at the Reject. An ensuing chain of grenades exploding! The explosion caused the Reject’s body to scatter all over the place. It was no different to the previous times. However.....

“This?”

A light flashed in Ark’s eyes.

The black form that scattered all over the place joined together again.

This time several faint red lines caught his eye. These lines connected to the centre of the black shell and formed balls of line like they were cells. The Reject’s body had broken apart many times but he hadn’t seen any scars until now.

He had no doubts anymore.

‘That’s it! That is his existence!’

“Sonic Sword!”

Ark threw his body forward and wielded his sword. The black shell split apart again and a ball clearly appeared. Ark narrowed the distance and the white sword danced.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Pepeng!

A ringing sound occurred as the ball was continuously cut. Then the stream of black shells couldn’t combine together again. At the same time, the Reject lose 10% of its health.

“I’ve found it! This is the weak point!”

Kuaaaaak! Kwaaaaah!

The Reject screamed for the first time and stretched out its tentacles. He hurriedly raised the Baius Shield but his body was thrown back. His health decreased but there was a smile on Ark’s face.

“Ha! That damn bastard, it is screaming now. But it is useless. Haven’t you been treating me as a punching bag? I will pay you back by beating you up! Armour armament! Berserker!”

His attacks hadn't connect in the beginning so he couldn't use his battle suit or Berserker. However, he used all his power now that he had found a way to fight. That's why he had been saving the skill!

"Lightning fast decision! Sonic Sword!"

His battle suit increased all stats by 35%! Then Berserker increased all attack skills by 1.5 times!

Sonic Sword had a different power then moment he reached perfect battle mode. The sword seemed to explode as it hit the Reject's body. And the ball was revealed! A shower of attacks once again exploded against the ball.

But he couldn't take the Reject's counterattack lightly. Once Ark revealed the weak point, the opponent felt the crisis and resisted more violently. The tentacles stretched all over the place and shells continued flying at Ark.

Wiing! Wiing! Pepepepeng! Kwa kwa kwa kwa!

A trail of explosions occurred between Ark and the Reject. Ark's health fell every time. From 30% to 25%, 25% to 20% and eventually 10% until he was in a critical condition.

'Damn, if only I found the weakness 5 minutes faster....'

He could then fight more leisurely.

But now there was only 1 minute left. Once Soul Sprint turned off, his 10% health would instantly disappear. It wasn't a situation where he could think of various plans while fighting.

'My health right now means that it is hard to receive an attack. But that guy still has 50% health left.' There were 5 beads left, each representing 10% health. He couldn't fight like he normally could. Then there was only one way left! Then I will use this attack to win!'

Ark grabbed his sword and glared at the Reject. At the same time, the shell opened to let out 10 shells.

"Recovery Ampoule! Activate the skill Ankh!"

Ark shouted as he rushed towards the shell. A recovery item and skill that healed him!

The recovery ampoule loaded on his Nymph entered the interior of his body at the same time. And Kuhwen's Chestpiece was wrapped in light and 1,500 health was restored.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The shells poured out and filled the environment with smoke. But the smoke quickly split apart and Ark sprang out of it. Recovering his health while rushing forward! Ark received the tentacles with his shield and jumped at the main body.

A black air current flowed around the main body while the tentacles attacked. In fact, this was the most dangerous part.

If the air current touched him then his health would be sucked out. Once he entered the area of the main body, his health would start falling at a rapid rate. However, Ark kept standing up and made the Equalizer spin around.

“Khafra Fencing 3rd style! Galaxy Sword! Time!”

The white swords that stretched out! Dozens of swords circulated around the Reject’s body like a typhoon. And the 5 balls that appeared! Ark used the momentum to run forward and shouted.

“18 Barrage!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

Steam emerged from the shoulders of the Hyper Drone as the steel fists exploded forward. He entered the area of the Reject’s body and 4 beads were destroyed. Now the only thing left was the head. There was one single ball floating.

The black shell immediately ran away after being hit by 18 Barrage.

“Not a chance! Armed Binding Sword!”

Ark laid down on the floor and shouted.

At that moment, chains of light exploded from the Hyper Drone. And he quickly approached the black shell once it was bound.

“18 Barrage!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

His steel fists emerged once again! There was one final scream before the black shell disappeared. At the same time, his mana was exhausted and the battle suit was removed.

-Your level has risen.

-Your level has risen.

“Pant pant pant. I-I won?”

Ark stuttered as he lay down on the floor.

Ark had been almost insane from the moment he jumped at the Reject’s main body. There was no time as his health was sucked out at a rapid pace.

In addition, 18 Barrage was a skill that was hard to control so there was no guarantee he would crush the balls. In fact, the Reject almost escaped before he trapped it. So he hadn't felt like he won until the level up messages appeared.

"If my reaction was too slow and it got away....."

His remaining health was 3%. The Reject would be the one eating up the experience if he died first.

"What the hell...my senses seem to have fallen more than before. It was a difficult boss but....I would've found the weakness quicker in New World. Because in New World most bosses needed the weak point in order to be killed."

Ark sighed and murmured while resting.

He won but he had a hard time against this opponent. His battle senses had dulled after gaining the master code in New World. He was careless and discovered another area where he was lacking.

However, the reflection ended here.

"I didn't read it all but Xanax's message makes it clear that a battle suit upgrade is here."

He could already guess what it was.

Reject. The black shell had the form of an armour. It was no coincidence that it looked similar to the Hyper Drone. Not surprisingly, the form of an intact armour was on the ground.

Ark's eyes glittered with anticipation as he picked up the shell. At the same time, the Nymphe vibrated and the information window appeared.

-New <Solid Armour: Fire Avarice> has been acquired.

A solid armour battle suit has now been registered.

Do you want to register<Solid Armour: Avarice> along with the battle suit Hyper Drone? (Y/N)

"Solid Armour?"

He had previously seen a solid armour. Ferguson had used it when they were caught in Hawk's trap on the enemy's base.

Solid armour was simply a battle suit with additional equipment. It contained specialized equipment developed for boosting specific performances.

"But I'm not sure what will be developed...."

The Murat had developed such technologies hundreds of years ago.

Ark couldn't help feeling a little disappointed. Solid armour definitely had considerable power. Despite that, a lot of users found it difficult to operate and the energy efficiency wasn't good so its uses plummeted over time.

The price was also incredibly expensive so it was better to raise the basic performance of a battle sui. Ark was expected the Hyper Drone's level to rise.

However, the result was a solid armour.

"But it is still free."

And he would like to try out a solid armour. If one was given for free then he would say thanks!

"Solid Armour register!"

-Hyper Drone <Solid Armour: Fire Avarice> has been registered.

Solid Armour (Fire Avarice): An additional armour made by combining a number of Drones together.

Solid Armour is basically wearing a battle suit.

And when equipping the Solid Armour, the performance of the battle sui will rise. However, a lot of mana will be consumed so the duration will be reduced by 30%.

But it will display the strongest firepower in a short period of time.

<Defense will increase by 30% when Solid Armour is attached, Movement Speed - 20%>

<Available technique when Solid Armour is equipped (Carpet Bombing): Fire Avarice is a type of Solid Armour specializing in firepower.

The Fire Avarice produces small, guided missiles that can target 12 objects at the same time.

Each shell will consume 3% of the mana that charges the battle suit. The power of the shells will depend on the level of the battle suit>

"Carpet Bombing...."

He liked the name of the technique.

Space 07: Fight for the Slaves' Liberation

“Huhu.”

Ark couldn't stop laughing. He had finished his task in Soul City. And he didn't understand it that well but he obtained that Xanax was investigating.

But that was a minor issue at the moment. He had travelled to Soul City. He received quite a bit of compensation.

The 3rd Divine Artefact the Phantom Boots and the Solid Armour. However, that wasn't the only thing obtained from Soul City. After fighting with the boss and equipping the Phantom Boots, an information window rose.

-The set items' effect has been applied.

Galaxian has a number of items that are closely related to each other throughout history. The items are associated with a famous event, legendary hero, etc. Once you have a certain number of these sets of items, an additional bonus will appear. When investigating the history and legends of Galaxian, there is a change to obtain set items.

* Currently equipped set items: Legendary Warrior

<Baius Shield>, <Kuhwen's Chestpiece>, <Phantom Boots>, <??>, <??>

3 items in the Legendary Warrior set has been equipped and one effect applied.

<Stage 1 (Awakening): Strength, Agility, Stamina +10. Defense +20>

Set items effect!

A bonus was given when collecting a series of items. An original set of items would have some type of effect.

No matter how good an equipment was, it wouldn't be as effective when reaching higher levels like level 50, 100 and 150. A level 50 unique item would be equivalent to a level 100 magic item and a level 150 general item. If a person insisted on staying with one particular equipment then their performance would suffer.

On the other hand, set items could be used for a significant amount of time. It was hard to find set items since they were often discarded as a person's level rose. That's why an effect was given as compensation for the set items. The additional bonus was given to maintain the value of the item series.

Of course, Ark's case was a little different.

Ark found that the performance of the Divine Artefacts were still superior compared to that of level 150 rare items. And now there was a further set effect added. Strength, Stamina and Agility +10 and Defense +20!

‘The bonus isn’t that high compared to my level now but...’

There were still 2 Divine Artefacts remaining. It meant the set item bonuses still had room to grow.

And that wasn’t all. The set item bonus came with the Phantom Bots. It wasn’t the only bonus.

It was what happened next! He continued reading Xanax’s message after taking care of the Reject.

Now you’re not a beginner anymore.

Your journey as an Elim’s Heir has been an easy journey up to here.

Sanctuary’s training centre, Rakunka and Soul City. The fact that you pushed through many difficulties and reached here is proof that you are already a warrior.

It proves that you are qualified and talented. As a reward, I will give you an Elim Khafra fighting skill.

The message ended here. The screen changed into a video. It was a first person video similar to when he learnt Psychokinesis.

The first was a rushing attack. Once 10 people holding shields were gathered, Xanax directed the exciting scene where he shot through them like an arrow while wielding his sword.

The second attack was a little unusual.

Xanax was engaged in a melee fight with enemies flocking from all sides. But whenever Xanax was hit by an attack, a chain of blue light would link the people together. If two people attacked then there were two and if three people attacked then there were three chains. Once five people were connected with the chain, Xanax would grip his fist tightly. Then the chain exploded and 5 people fell at the same time.

And the information window that appeared!

-A new skill (Occupation Restricted ☆☆☆☆) has been learnt.

A total of 9 fighting styles is present in Khafra Fighting and style 4 and 5 has been learnt.

-4th Style (Piercing Lv. 1): A technique that will break through the enemy with a powerful thrust.

<Force: 100>

-5th Style (Chain Attack Lv. 1): A technique that binds 5 enemies together before

exploding.

<Force: 200>

In other words, this was the end of the probationary period. He had received the techniques after becoming a formal heir.

Ark was already overflowing with skills. He had received various miscellaneous skills wandering around in the early days. However, he surprisingly didn't have a lot of attack skills.

The body coating and Rune Carving were supplementary skills. With the exception of Sonic Sword, his remaining attacks were the Khafra Fencing skills learnt from Xanax.

Any user Ark's level would have an average of 10 combat skills.

'It is still fairly good but I've been wanting more skills to use depending on the situation.'

Now he had added two more combat skills. When he found the 4th Divine Artefact....

Ark felt like endorphins were rushing to his head. But he couldn't go to that place yet. He wanted to continue to marvel over the Divine Artefact but he still had work remaining. The pyramid on Inquiry.

"Okay, shall I go back now?"

The method to return to Inquiry was simple.

Shortly after killing the Reject, the wall on the opposite side split open and a chamber was revealed. An Anubis scale similar to the one on the Inquiry pyramid could be seen. Of course, he had to use Hajaska in order to see Anubis.

"I probably have to get on that scale."

Ark approached the scale before stopping. And then he summoned Basak.

"Basak, it is sudden but it is a pleasure to meet you again."

Basak's soul dwelled in Bao due to the effect of Soul City. When he returned to Inquiry, the golem would probably return to its previous indifferent state.

–Yes, Hyung-nim. In fact, I was anxious. I don't want to say farewell like this. And I've noticed something. My consciousness will probably disappear again soon.

"That's why I wanted to ask you something."

Ark sighed before asking.

"Do you know about the rude manners of the Baius Golem? If it didn't have any ability then I wouldn't bring it around with me."

–Let’s see. I don’t know....

“Anyway, your will still dwells in the golem. Therefore make a little effort. It would be good if the golem is slightly affected by you.”

–That...I will make an effort.

Basak scratched his head.

But this wasn’t what he really wanted to say.

Basak chose to die on Muratio Star to save Ark’s life. It might’ve been a pre-arranged event but Basak was still a special NPC to Ark. He might be in the form of a golem but meeting Basak again was an enjoyable experience for Ark.

However, this was the last time.

Once he returned to Inquiry, he probably wouldn’t be able to meet Basak again. It wasn’t easy to leave while thinking about that. But he couldn’t say any affectionate words despite feeling sad.

“At any rate, stay focused from now on. Do you understand?”

–Yes, Hyung-nim. Be healthy.

“Yes, you too.”

Basak returned to a shield form after hearing that. Ark took off his equipment and stepped on Anubis’s scale.

Somewhere in the northern part of the galaxy.

It was a place where colourful nebula gas was congregating and black smoke rose. The smoke was rising from a tattered spaceship. And another battleship was attached to it with an anchor.

The battleship’s bridge.

“The remnants?”

“I’ve received a report from the crew that all enemy combatants have been handled. Now the combat crew is grabbing the cargo and will soon return to the ship.”

“Those naive guys.”

The bald man sitting in the captain’s chair muttered.

“The pirate occupation wouldn’t exist without riffraff like that.”

“They are pitiful for supposedly incredible bounty hunters. They are used to fleet battles so they were easily wiped out in hand to hand combat. Shouldn’t a bounty hunter show more backbone?”

“Don’t say such unreasonable words. No one is a match for the captain.”

“Aren’t I strong as well?”

“Shut up.”

The watching crew started laughing.

“Anyway, we’ve cleaned up the annoying bounty hunters. The bounty might rise but no bounty hunters will take the job for a while.”

“It is a good thing. They are annoying.”

“So what now?”

“Let’s see...shall we check on that fellow Berami?”

“Berami? Are you thinking of granting his request?”

“It isn’t a bad proposal.”

“But.....”

“It doesn’t matter. I know that person from before. It is okay to grant the favour. Our bad reputation has grown again so we’re not in the position to worry about it. And who knows? Maybe we might obtain something amazing? Right now Berami is excavating a Murat ruin. Even selling 4 artefacts will be enough to earn a lot of money.”

The bald person said with a smirk. Several armed soldiers entered the bridge and reported back.

“Captain-nim, the 12 people of the Peris unit has completed our task and returned.”

“What did you obtain?”

“We searched thoroughly but could only find ammunition and shells.”

“The ship?”

“The engine and major facilities have been destroyed so it isn’t even good as scrap metal.”

The bald person clicked his tongue at the report and said.

“This sometimes happens in a battle. Bounty hunters pursuing criminals won’t bring a lot of criminals. It will also be difficult to repair the battleships after winning the battle. Then let’s go see Berami and try to earn some money. Now let’s depart.”

“Then the spaceship....?”

The bald man turned his head at the crew member's words. And he looked at the spaceship enveloped in black smoke for a moment before saying.

"Are you talking about that junk? Bomb it."

Dozens of gunfire poured from the battleship.

The battleship was then enveloped in light and disappeared.

"Eh? What is this?"

Ark's eyes widened. He had stepped on Anubis's scale and returned to Inquiry.

Ark woke up and discovered himself lying down in a corner of the main hall. He wasn't sure why he was lying down but Ark put on his equipment and went to the workshop of the octopuses. The work was in progress.

However, the Charenjok elder Hakun said some unexpected words.

–Why did you only come now?

"Why, did something happen?"

–No, the work is progressing as scheduled. We are also desperate so it will be finished in a few hours. But how can we not be jumpy when you spent the entire time lying down in the main hall and your subordinates haven't returned yet?

'I haven't moved from the main hall?'

Ark naturally thought his entire character had moved to the ghost planet. But Hakun said he had been lying down in the main hall. In other words, his body had remained in a situation similar to hibernation. He was thrilled after belatedly realizing this. It meant he was never in danger of dying.

But right now he was more worried about another part. It was the disappearance of Tori and Milan.

"Did you say that Tori and Milan haven't come back?"

–You didn't know? In fact, there was an earthquake here before you fell asleep. We were working on the part that collapsed when a passage appeared. You hadn't woken up yet so they said they would look in the passage.

"A passage?"

The situation wasn't anything unusual. Ark used the Nymphe to try and communicate with them. However, it might be because they were in an underground area but the communication didn't connect.

'Dammit, those children....'

Ark was guided to the passage by Hakun. The traps that were turned off in the passage caught his eyes.

Milan was a fairly high level Treasure Hunter. Traps of this degree weren't a significant problem to him. But he still couldn't be relaxed.

Communication wasn't working so Tori and Milan might be in danger. Or in the worst case situation, they might already be dead. Ark couldn't shake off his anxiety as he entered the passage. And discovered the elevator at the end of it.

"Eh? Hyung-nim?"

"You woke up!"

Two people came out from the elevator.

"Tori? Milan? These brats, where the hell are you coming from?"

"That...didn't Hakun tell you?"

"I came here because he told me. But where did you emerge from just now? Communication wasn't working so of course I was surprised!"

"Were you worried about us?"

Milan asked while laughing. It was embarrassing. Ark blushed and scratched his head as Milan continued.

"It couldn't be helped. Hyung-nim was suddenly lying down naked and a questionable passage was found in the workshop. Can we wait for Hyung-nim in such a situation? Besides, I am Treasure Hunter. How could I ignore a questionable passage in the ruins? So we decided to investigate until Hyung-nim woke up."

Once again, NPCs were just like users. NPCs in virtual reality games were autonomous. They could think and act for themselves. Therefore NPCs could be entrusted with complaints or quests.

Once that autonomy was maximized, the NPC could find an occupation corresponding to it. Warrior NPCs could appear as enemies and some became treasure hunters like Milan in order to search the ruins.

From the user's point of view, they were very easy to use. Fortunately it wasn't a big deal this time, but if the traps installed were at a higher level then they might've died.

'It is common for NPCs to find ruins like this so I should consider furthering their education in this area in the future.'

This wasn't an easy game.

"So? How far did you go?"

“Ah, that’s right! Hyung-nim, listen to this. Do you want to know what we found? Don’t be alarmed. This pyramid is in fact the Murat’s research facility. The most surprising thing is that they studied the ghost planet here. Ghost planet! Hyung-nim was trying to enter the ghost planet.”

Too slow.

Ark had already entered the ghost planet and returned. However, it wasn’t surprising that the pyramid was a separate research facility.

‘Come to think of it, Xanax did say that a research laboratory was set up to study the ghost planet. I thought that the gateway to reach the ghost planet was weird. So this pyramid is the separate research facility? Then it might be different from other Murat ruins?’

It was natural to think like that. But it was real!

“I haven’t identified the way to enter the ghost planet yet. I’ve glanced at the remaining materials...it says that the Lion’s Gate system is in the main hall where Hyung-nim was sleeping but I don’t know what that means. There was nothing. But I found something else from the laboratory.”

“Something else?”

“Look here. This.”

Tori pulled out something the size of a cigarette pack. A red button was pressed and a 3D image flashed at the top of the device. Various images of machines with complex numbers and symbols behind them appeared.

An information window popped up when Ark saw it.

-<Blueprint: Unconfirmed> has been acquired.

A product that can be purchased in various stores in Galaxian but the appropriate NPC or skill is required to use it. In this case, the ability to make blueprints is required. Blueprints can be bought in the store but buying it is expensive and the end produce might be cheaper. In addition, blueprints are rarely found in ancient ruins and the item might have a special effect. However, a considerable amount of time is needed to research these blueprints.

Required Skills: Mechanical engineering, bio-engineering, invention and research.

Research Funding: 1500~2500 gold

Research Duration: 15 days or more

* The funds, research time and success rate will change according to the level and skill of the researcher. The research costs will be lost if it fails but there are no special

restrictions on the blueprints so it can be used again.

Tori found a blueprint! In other words, it was an recipe to produce an item.

Usually it was something that a lot of merchants produced. Once the recipe was bought and the research finished, it was possible to make a finished item 30% cheaper. Blue collar items would normally make these items in order to get experience and profit from selling it to users.

Recipes ranged from a screw to a ship! Since the early stages, a common dream for some users was to own a factory that produced various consumables and ship parts. One of the Seven Swords had this as the target.

Anyway!

These recipes were necessary for merchants. And general grade recipes could be easily purchased in stores but it was rare to obtain recipes for magic or rare items. Even unidentified blueprints were expensive but....

‘I’ve obtained a long awaited blueprint but it can’t be sold.’

Normally a user would sell the blueprints at the auction house.

However, Ark was the CEO of an Agent. And his staff had two researchers, Tori and Jay. The main difference was that the blueprint was found in the Murat ruins! Money and time might be required but it was worth studying.

Now he couldn’t scold Tori and Milan.

“Well done.”

“I told you he would be happy if we find the treasure.”

Milan’s expression changed after hearing Ark’s praise.

“There wasn’t anything else?”

“Yes, we only found this blueprint. And the structure of the pyramid was already excavated so we didn’t find any place other than the laboratory.”

“Let’s go back and search again.”

Ark wouldn’t just listen to the words of a NPC. However, he rode the elevator down with Milan and Tori and couldn’t find anything despite thoroughly searching. There were also no other structures in the area. Everything was now in ruins.

“There is no more reason to stay here.”

“Then.....?”

“We will leave at a suitable time.”

Ark grinned and nodded at Milan's question. But there was still one problem remaining. Ark promised 50% of the proceeds to Berami. However, Ark had no intention of splitting the revenue with Berami.

Ark's original purpose was the Divine Artefact. But it was different from sharing the items with other users. Ark intended to take 100% of the profit.

He was also aware that Berami wouldn't keep the promise. Ark also had no intention of keeping the promise. Once again, Ark recorded a video for the Flies to be played while the octopuses carried out other tasks.

"Are you ready?"

After a while, Ark returned to the workplace and asked the octopuses. Hakun and the 100 octopuses nodded.

—We are prepared for any pain.

—For the sake of freedom!

And the operation begun.

"That is?"

"Ack, isn't that a little bad?"

The barracks built in front of the pyramid. Berami's henchmen A, B and C muttered as they gathered around a monitor.

In fact, Berami had been very uncomfortable over the last day. Because of Ark.

He seemed like a moderately good treasure hunter as he diligently explored but starting from the second day, he just slept in the main hall.

Tori and Milan had prepared recorded images and Ark a fake relic in advance. But Berami hadn't hired Ark to obtain such japtem.

'This is a ruin. There should be some things worth a lot of money!'

It was due to these expectations. At the time of the contract signing, Ark had boosted his expectations to 10,000 gold. From an employer's point of view, he would naturally be angry after seeing Ark stay asleep.

No, he wasn't just angry.

'Damn, this is difficult! He was the one who pushed for the contract. 'My position will be difficult if he continues acting like this!'

Berami didn't intend to give any compensation to Ark. Therefore he had already set up plans to get around the 'legal' parts and called someone to help. Of course he would be frustrated if Ark didn't work properly.

'But it wasn't necessary to worry.'

Ark had finally woken up a few hours ago. That wasn't all. He urged the octopuses on and they started frantically digging.

'That's right. That Ark, maybe he was in hibernation so they he could look up information about the pyramid structure on the internet? Maybe he found a lead which is why he is digging like crazy after waking up. Huhuhu, I did well to hire a professional. Okay. Work hard. It will all be my share eventually.'

Berami relaxed and waited for the good news. But the internal situation wasn't as relaxed as Berami thought.

Ark really was a brutal person. Once he started actively working, he was merciless to the octopuses. If they delayed digging even a little bit then he would kick or punch them. Sometimes he would step on them until they became rags.

It felt like watching a 18+ rated horror movie.

"Aren't they really going to die?"

"Hyung-nim, that is too much no matter how you look at it. Shouldn't we discourage it?"

"Leave it."

Berami shook his head.

"There are only a few days remaining until the promised deadline. However, the profit we've received now isn't enough to cover the costs. We need to eat so we should just watch. But keep an eye on the monitor. Make sure Ark doesn't hide any treasures."

....Berami leisurely said.

And after a few hours.

"Eh?"

Henchman A burst out with confusion.

"What? Did Ark find something?"

"No, it's just...the video of the Fly no. 1, 4 and 5 suddenly turned off."

"The videos were turned off? Why?"

"I'm not sure. There doesn't seem to be a problem with the monitor...eh? Eh? The other cameras are sequentially turned off. Now the only Flies remaining are those attached to Ark and the workshop."

“What do you mean? The Flies wouldn’t fail all at once.”

“That’s...heok! W-what is this?”

The henchmen screamed as they stared at the monitor. In the remaining two monitors, an octopus was shining in one video. But there was something strange.

The head of the octopuses had 8 shapes shining on it. This was due to the Slave’s Collar. But the head of the octopus in the video was clear! It didn’t have the Slave’s Collar.

That wasn’t all. The octopus’s leg was holding a rifle! The octopus on the screen waved the rifle while shouting.

–We absolutely reject any further exploitation!

Tu tu tu tu! Pak! Jijijiji....

There was the sound of gunfire and a static noise was heard from the screen.

“What? How did the octopus take off the Slave’s Collar? And what else is there? Dammit! What the hell is happening? Ark? What is that Ark bastard doing?”

“Take a look! Ark is also under attack by the octopuses!”

Henchman B shouted as he pointed at the remaining video. It was indeed a shocking video.

All the octopuses had removed the Slave’s Collar and were brandishing a rifle. Bullets were hearing towards Ark, Tori and Milan. The three of them rolled on the ground to escape the bullets.

Tu tu tu tu! Pepeng! Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Pepeng!

An ensuring roar was then heard. The sound wasn’t coming from the monitor. It seemed to be coming from outside the barracks.

“H-Hyung-nim!”

“Damn, what the hell is going on? It can’t be helped. Hey, prepare your weapons! We are entering the field directly. Hurry! It will become complicated if the octopuses manage to get outside!”

Berami led his henchmen towards the pyramid. And one man was staggering towards them from the entrance. It was Ark whose body was bleeding from gunshots.

“Ark, you bastard! What did you do?”

Berami ran towards Ark and gripped his collar. Ark raised his head and exclaimed.

“That’s what I want to ask, you bastard!”

“W-what the?”

“You damn bastard! What did you do? Why are their slave collars gone?”

“Slave collars? I never took the Slave’s Collar off!”

“Don’t make me laugh! Do you think I’m a fool? You must have cancelled the operational program in the collar! If the slaves try to take it off by force then the collar will explode! And you are the person with access to the operation program! The only thing I can think of is that you turned off the program!”

“Damn! I didn’t do that!”

“Then how did they remove the collars?”

“I-I don’t know either.”

“.....Really?”

“Really! Why would I do such a thing?”

“No, I....”

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

Then a shower of bullets poured from the opposite passage. Berami and Ark who were yelling at each other split apart and hid. Then a grenade exploded at the spot where they were standing.

The area shook and black smoke poured out.

“T-that grenade was aiming for him....”

“My mistake. In fact, a few hours ago I mobilized the octopuses to dig somewhere. After seeing the whole structure of the pyramid, I was confident that there would be a room hidden somewhere. And I just found a hidden room. But something unexpected was there.”

“Something unexpected?”

“An armoury.”

Ping! Ping! Ping!

A sighed as a shower of bullets bounced off the corner Ark was hiding behind.

“I don’t know why there would be an armoury hidden in the ruins. Rifles, hand grenades and ammunition. Various weapons were piled up like a mountain. I expected artefacts to emerge from the ruins not weapons. But the collars were unexpectedly turned off and the octopuses picked up the weapons to attack. I managed to reach here but my subordinates....”

Ark bit his lip as he couldn’t continue. And he turned his head to look at Berami.

“I thought you planted those weapons for the octopuses in advance.”

“T-that is impossible! If I did that then the slave collars wouldn’t be necessary.”

“Yes, I realized that part. Sorry for doubting you. I was rash.”

“No, I would’ve thought the same thing if I was in your shoes.”

“Thank you for understanding.”

Ark bowed with a bloody face.

He had lost his subordinates and became bloody due to the sudden attack. However, he still managed to grasp the situation objectively and admit his own mistakes. Berami thought that Ark was somehow amazing.

‘He could possibly become a real friend...’

He contemplated that thought. But now wasn’t the time to think about that.

“Hyung-nim, what should we do in this situation?”

“Damn, what else? Scare those octopuses! Do they think they can get away just before the slave collar was removed and they have weapons? They are still octopuses despite holding weapons. We don’t have to do anything. Just kill a few of them and force the collars back on!”

“No, that will be difficult.”

At that time there were loud noises.

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

And a frantic shout could be heard from a nearby passage.

–Hey! There are some people hidden here! Listen carefully! We reject being slaves! We are the Charenjok! A species of the galaxy! You don’t have the right to exploit us! And we won’t accept such treatment anymore! And we’ve placed bombs all over these ruins! If you want to keep the ruins then prepare a spaceship for us! The time limit is 5 minutes! If you use force to try and subdue us then we will set off the bombs! Freedom or death!

–Ohhhhhh! Freedom or death!

“B-bombs?”

“We shouldn’t blindly attack.”

Ark said as he bit his lip.

“Bombs are fairly common in armouries. The octopuses might not be experts in bombs but they will be able to set off an explosion. No, those guys really might self-destruct.

Their eyes show that they aren't joking. Of course, you can attack them if you want the artefacts in the ruins to disappear."

"No, that will be difficult!"

Berami shouted frantically.

The 100 octopuses were armed with weapons. And there were even grenades and bombs. The octopuses might not be experienced in handling weapons but there were enough of them that they couldn't be ignored. However, Berami was more worried about something else.

Once again, Berami wasn't the real owner of the octopuses. 'He' had loaned out the slaves to excavate the ruins. If the octopuses died then Berami would be the one to pay for them. He would obtain the debt of 100 octopus slaves.

That was why he couldn't grant the octopuses' request.

"Waaahhhh!"

Berami was in a state of panic. Ark thought for a while before speaking in a low voice.

"I have a way to solve it."

"What? You? How?"

"The situation right now is quite bad. If we attempt to stamp it out forcefully then they might really self-destruct...but if the elder is taken hostage then they might not self-destruct so easily."

"Hostage?"

"Yes, I've been watching them in the meantime and the elder's influence over the octopuses is quite large. Maybe the elder is the planner behind this rebellion. So the elder should hold the key to solving the problem. Put a Slave's Collar on him. If I threaten him with the collar then they will be forced to give up on their threats."

"But we have these people to contend with."

"No, I am different."

Ark grinned and replied. Then Ark's body turned transparent and he disappeared. The light that refracted off his body was one of the Survivor Coating skills, Stealth!

Ark revealed his body to Berami again.

"Did you see? I specialize in something like this. I once had a career as a ranger who served in the military. Anyway, right now there is no other way. Trust in me and give me the program to the slave collars. It is a risk but I can't give up after losing two subordinates.

"B-but....."

–There are 3 minutes remaining!

Then the octopus inside the passage could be heard gain. He couldn't afford to think about it anymore. In the end, Berami was forced to transfer the program to Ark.

"Okay. I believe in you. Please Ark!"

"I will do my best."

Ark disappeared again after those words.

–Now there are 2 minutes remaining!

"Just wait, you bastards! I understand! I'll arrange a spaceship for you!"

Berami suddenly shouted.

He felt like his insides were burning. If Ark failed then everything was over! He would incur a tremendous debt thanks to the ruins and the 100 Charenjok slaves. But Berami couldn't do anything. If Ark safely completed his task then the slave rebellion would be suppressed.

Second by second passed as it seemed like hours.

"Don't move!"

Ark's voice was suddenly heard from the passage.

"I've already captured your elder. Ah! Don't move! There is already a Slave's Collar on your elder's head! I don't know how you got them off but it won't work this time! If I see any suspicious movements then the Slave's Collar on the elder will explode! If anything happens then I will kill your elder! Would you like to be responsible for his death?"

'S-succeeded!'

Berami clenched his fists.

It wasn't visible but he felt assured now that Ark had caught the elder as a hostage. But the most important part was from now on. These octopuses were already prepared for death! He couldn't feel relaxed even with the elder caught.

In that respect, Ark was definitely a professional.

"I also understand your feelings. Yes, you were once free. You became slaves because you didn't join any of the 3 powers and resentment built up from all the cruelty. But think about it calmly. What will you do even if you escape from this planet on a spaceship? You will just continue being caught and becoming slaves on the frontier. At most, you will only be free for a few days. Is taking your lives worth being free for a few days?"

'Ooh! Yes, that's it! He has struck the key part! This guy, it is like when he made the contract. Okay, he should push forward like that!'

Berami passionately cheered. However, Ark's voice stayed the same.

"But I understand your mind. And I've talked to Berami after reflecting. Even if you are slaves, I've treated you too harshly so far. I promise to improve your treatment from now on. If you discard your weapons then I will reduce your working hours, give you abundant food and enough resting time. In addition, there will be no violence."

—Abundant food and plenty of rest...living without violence...

The octopuses started buzzing. It seemed like they were shaken.

—That is a lie!

Then an octopus shouted.

—You aren't the one who originally made us slaves! Nor is it Berami! Berami borrowed us from someone! And once this is finished, we will return to being his slaves! What meaning does this promise have?

—That's right! That guy won't be able to keep the promise! If we put down the weapons then we will return to our old life!

—Mean humans!

An abrupt reversal of the atmosphere! At the same time, Berami's Nymphe vibrated and Ark's voice emerged from it.

—Berami! What does that mean? The octopuses said they are someone else's slave! Then why did you make that promise to me? You offered me the octopuses if I made 10,000 gold! You bastard, you just wanted to trick me!

"N-no, that's not...."

—Dammit, this is all wrong! They are all looking at me. Are you going to help? This plan is going wrong! I'm going to die because of you!

"S-sorry! But I really...."

Berami stuttered with a pale face.

—Charenjok! It might be vexing but now we have hope! It is better to die with freedom then spend our whole lives as slaves! Freedom or death!

—Ohhhhhhh! Freedom or death!

—We are free!

Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The octopuses yelled like fanatics. An explosion occurred from every direction and black smoke poured out of the passages. Thick cracks spread along the walls and the whole pyramid started shaking.

“Hyung-nim, the ruins are crumbling!”

“We must escape before it is too late!”

“B-but.....”

“There’s no time! Hey, Hyung-nim!”

Henchmen A, B and C grabbed Berami and pulled him out of the pyramid. And they hurriedly ran to the barracks. The pyramid shook and was buried in a huge cloud of dust. Berami watched blankly before flopping down and stuttering.

“D-destroyed...the ruins...”

At that time.

“Those fools.”

Ark laughed as he watched the cloud of dust from far away. Ark wasn’t in that place. Milan, Tori and even Hegel had gathered in one place while the rebellion was going on.

Gathered in front of him were more than 150 octopuses!

“How was my performance?”

“I was completely convinced.”

Milan laughed at Ark’s question.

That’s right. The rebellion of the octopuses in the pyramid had been planned by Ark. Ark had mobilized 100 octopuses to dig a tunnel over the last few days. The tunnel exited to a mountain to the rear of the pyramid. It was all for hiding the octopuses.

The most difficult part was the slave collars. The slave collars were....

-Slave’s Collar

Item Type: Binding Ring

If you enter the authentication number of your Nymphe into this ring, you can restrict the body of a monster. The collar can tighten to give pain and it will blow up if the monster leaves the designated area.

The collar was developed to train captured monsters but now it is used to capture nationless aliens not protected by the federation. Therefore it became known as the slave’s collar. It is prohibited by law to use these rings on people with a citizenship.

....It was like that.

Berami was in control of the program that could cause the rings to explode at any time to kill the octopuses. It would also automatically exploded if they moved out of a set distance.

That was why Hegel had been away. Hegel had gone back to S-20 and returned with 50 of Ark's octopuses.

They were the rebel octopuses in the pyramid. They pretended to be slaves and caused a revolt. That was why they didn't have the slave collars. And the octopuses with the collars....

"Okay, now you are free."

Ark said while manipulating his Nymphe. The slave collars fell from the heads of 100 octopuses. This was due to the program he received from Berami.

–Ohh! I never thought this day would come in my entire life!

–We are free!

The octopuses were thrilled. At that moment, one of the said with an uneasy expression.

–But what Ark-nim said in the pyramid is true. We aren't affiliated with the 3 powers or protected on the frontier by the council. The galaxy is a wide place but nowhere is safe.

"Do not worry."

Ark smiled and said.

"I have a sector on Istana. And there are already many Charenjok living in my sector. If you like then you can live there."

–R-really?

–Yes, I can guarantee it. In fact, we were once slaves of a city called Charem. We were saved by Ark. And now we are living in Ark-nim's sector. Ark-nim is like a saviour to us.

–Ohh! Ark, you will really accept us?

Of course. If he helped the Charenjok then the elder would upgrade his token. Besides, it was more labour for his food manufacturing factory. That's why he set up this play and used expensive bombs.

It would be hard if they didn't come with him.

"As I said before, I consider the Charenjok to be my friends. The Charenjok are always welcome."

–Thank you! Thank you! I'm asking you.

Hakun grabbed Ark's arm while crying.

"We can talk more later. It would be better to get far away from the pyramid. We have to leave Inquiry or else Berami might notice something."

–Understood. C-Charenjok! Board our saviour's ship!

The octopuses entered the Silver Star.

Apart from Hegel and the 50 octopuses from S-20, there were now 100 new octopuses. The Silver Star was an upgraded battleship but it was still packed with octopuses.

A battleship filled with seafood! It was a literal full boat!

"Now, let's go! To Istana!"

"Yes!"

The Silver Star entered space. Then it was engulfed in particles of light and headed towards Istana.

Space 08: In the Name of the Father

“This week’s TOP 50.”

It was the popular game scoops program on the professional gaming channel KGL. The signature KGL program got a lot of responses from the users due to their in depth analysis of the situation in various virtual reality games.

These days, it was becoming increasingly popular due to the signing of the popular celebrity Jung Hye-sun and announcer Lee Ji-un. The game that attracted most of the viewers’ attention after 11 months was the game Galaxian. After having a poll questioning the viewers, they announced a weekly corner called the TOP 50.

Lee Ji-un skilfully started the corner.

“This week we’re talking about the top 7 ranking in the TOP 50. The users that occupy this place are called the Seven Swords. In the several months since the TOP 50 started, I’ve been overwhelmed with the power of the Seven Swords. But this time the rankings within the Seven Swords have fluctuated a little bit. The user Carly has risen. There was a huge difference between Carly and the other users in the Seven Swords so he stayed at rank 7. But this time he leapt all the way to rank 4. It is unusual to have such fluctuations in the Seven Swords. What on earth happened?”

“It is infamous.”

Jung Hye-sun continued.

“We can’t disclose Carly’s personal information or information about his spaceship and forces. That is because he is a pirate on the space frontier.”

“Isn’t it surprising that a member of the Seven Swords is a pirate?”

“As you know, the players who make up the TOP 50 ranking are the users with the most awareness. Anyone with an exceptionally high level, have their name spread or enough forces will be able to climb up the TOP 50 rankings. But that awareness doesn’t mean they need to have a good image.”

The important thing was how well known the user was. In other words, other people were evaluating the user’s skill.

“Carly had become notorious on the frontier and his name causes a lot of fear. But as a pirate, he didn’t disclose all his information so he received a low evaluation among the Seven Swords. When thinking about it, it is amazing that he is even included in the Seven Swords despite not making his power public.”

“In other words, infamy spread his name.”

“That’s right.”

Jung Hye-sun smiled and nodded.

“But why did Carly’s ranking suddenly rise?”

“It is probably because of the Council’s pirate clean-up operation not long ago.”

“Isn’t the Council that administration on the frontier? There was a pirate clean-up operation occurring in that place?”

“Yes, the number of pirates on the space frontier have been steadily increasing in recent years. So the Council gathered many famous bounty hunters for a joint operation to clean up the pirates. But this time the operation failed.”

“They couldn’t catch the pirates?”

“No. In the first 10 days, the joint operation managed to sink 12 pirate ships. In addition, five of the pirates were captured and brought in front of the Council for the judicial process. However, the operation failed when it came to catching the most famous pirate Carly. 6 bounty hunters were sent to get rid of Carly and they all disappeared. The effect of this incident was huge and caused Carly’s ranking to rise to 4th place.”

“Indeed.”

Lee Ji-un nodded his head. And he deliberately shuddered before continuing.

“The frontier is a scary place so users have to be more careful there. There are pirates but this is one of the elements that makes it like a game. The victims might not be satisfied but they recognized that it is part of game play. And while Carly’s rank rose, there is a user who fell.”

“Of course.”

“Who is it?”

“The user called Hawk. Carly rose and Hawk was pushed to 7th place.”

“Wasn’t Hawk a user who once rose to 2nd place and is always within the top 4 rankings? It is unexpected to hear that he dropped to 7th place in one week. What happened?”

“It is probably due to the magic circle event that occurred the other day.”

Jung Hye-sun explained in a difficult to interpret voice.

“After the incident, the 3 powers secretly dispatched an investigation team consisting of users. According to rumours, Hawk of the Seven Swords also participated in this investigation team. Most users predicted that Hawk would gain the best achievements. But Hawk became the runner up.”

“Yes.....”

Lee Ji-un nodded as he heard this. And continued talking with a grin.

“In fact, there is another interesting fact related to this incident. The person who gained the highest achievements in the magic circle even was a user called Ark. According to an investigation that we conducted, the Ark who is known as Beltana’s Hero isn’t the same Ark from New World. Rumours were spread and he almost entered the top 30 ranking but....”

“There was a backlash from some users?”

“Yes, it is from the users who participated in the quest. According to the words from those who were in the investigation team, Ark only gained the best achievements due to luck. In fact, some users revealed the video related to it. That is why Ark who was in the top 30 was pushed out of the TOP 50 this week.”

“This is the first time something like this has happened.

“That’s right. Whether the Ark who is Beltana’s Hero is also Ark of New World, that name has always been a hot topic. The one thing that is clear is that users are interested. This time Ark sadly didn’t enter the TOP 50. If there is a chance then the game scoop wants a word with him.”

“I hope that day comes.”

Jung Hye-sun added with a bright smile.

The broadcast lasted for more than 20 minutes. And once the broadcast ended, the staff needed to clean up. There was a busy shooting schedule but Jung Hye-sun went to find the PD in charge.

“Director-nim, are you really planning to have Ark on the show?”

“Let’s see? The viewers are curious so if there is the change then I would certainly want to. But why?”

“No, that....”

Jung Hye-sun hesitated at the PD’s question. After a short time, her expression made it seem like she decided something.

“Then at that time, can I not cover it directly?”

“Hye-sun ssi? It isn’t good if Hye-sun doesn’t show up. The viewers will notice and react. But it is easy. He refused our request when he became Beltana’s hero.”

“I’m aware of that. This request is just in case that ever happens.”

Jung Hye-sun said in a stubborn voice.

“I’m really sorry.”

Hyun-woo sighed and put down his phone. Then Cho Min-sun who was sitting across from him asked.

“Who was on the phone?”

“The writer for the TV program called Game Scoop wants to interview me. But I rejected it.”

In fact, this wasn't the first time he received such calls.

Reporters called him the moment he was announced as Beltana's Hero in the Galactic Federation. But Hyun-woo declined their offers. The reason was that he hated showing his face.

He didn't want to draw attention. This was a firm policy of Hyun-woo since his early days in New World! That idea hadn't changed. Those in the limelight would always be bound to incite jealousy. Of course, that concern increased even further after he became famous.

So he tried not to be noticeable. That was 'Ark's style.'

There were other reasons.

'Jung Hye-sun....'

She was a celebrity newly signed to the Game Scoop a few months ago. Once she was Hyun-woo's friend. Now there wasn't a relationship between them any longer so he wanted to avoid her.

Of course, he couldn't possibly mention this to Cho Min-sun. He wasn't hiding it but there was no reason to talk about it.

Hyun-woo scratched his head with an awkward expression and murmured.

“I don't have the constitution to be on television.”

“Didn't you have an autobiography written about you?”

“It wasn't my idea and Global Exos was the one who planned and implemented it. I was just used as propaganda for Global Exos.”

“Hrmm.....”

Hyun-woo mock scowled at Cho Min-sun.

However, that playful mood didn't last long. After talking for a short time, Cho Min-sun's face filled with tension again. She spent quite a bit of time in front of the mirror.

But Hyun-woo's eyes were filled with laughter as he looked at her. Cho Min-sun pouted cutely and asked.

“What's with that look?”

“Huh? My expression?”

“I don’t like self-satisfied expressions like that.”

“This is really fun. Min-sun ssi, do you know your nickname on Beltana? Shameless. A woman who wouldn’t care even if the prisoners were stabbed. Honestly, I also had that impression at first. Seeing you fidget like this is too cute.”

Hyun-woo’s smile became wider as Cho Min-sun’s face turned red.

“T-that is mean!”

“So are you feeling flustered?”

Hyun-woo was unable to stop his laughter.

“It is still a little surprising. I didn’t know Min-sun ssi would agree so easily.”

“It isn’t easy. But I couldn’t refuse after you deliberately told me about your parents. Do you understand what I’m saying? It isn’t because of Hyun-woo ssi.”

“Your boyfriend’s parents. I’m aware of that.”

“At any rate....”

Cho Min-sun scowled before sighing.

“What is it? You seem too tense. It is just meeting them properly. You don’t need to worry about offending both of them....”

There was a reason she was feeling like this.

In fact, Hyun-woo had been receiving pressure from his mother and father for a while. They found out about Cho Min-sun thanks to the rehabilitation group and his parents wanted to be formally introduced to her. However, Hyun-woo hadn’t considered reaching that point yet.

Everything had its own time. Introducing a girl to the parents had a special meaning in Korea.

Cho Min-sun felt burdened and worried due to this meaning. But to be honest, Hyun-woo was willing to formally introduce her to his parents. It might be a bit cowardly but he wanted to confirm Cho Min-sun’s heart.

So after worrying about it, he decided to tell her. But unlike Hyun-woo’s anxiety, she willingly accepted. Hyun-woo felt two different things at this time. One feeling was that he was grateful she was so willing and the other was uncertainty about the serious relationship. The psychology of a man while dating was often confusing.

But Cho Min-sun ultimately arrived at the promised meeting spot. She was constantly fidgeting while waiting for his parents. It was a serious situation but Hyun-woo actually felt relieved at his attitude. It meant she was taking this seriously.

‘But it will be difficult if she stays in this state.’

Hyun-woo said with a smile.

“What is going on at the Galactic Federation’s headquarters these days?”

“The work has been rapid since I’ve been promoted. In the past, I was under Buldio but I now have a team after being promoted to Captain. So the Galactic Federation has me going to a planet or sector to investigate and sometimes I go catch thieves or monsters. It is a situation where I can’t rest due to the quests stacking up.”

This was the type of work assigned to users by the Galactic Federation.

Various incidents would occur on the planets of the Galactic Federation. The Galactic Federation assigned users quests and domestic complaints to handle.

This was the reason why users preferred the Galactic Federation.

The civil affairs department of the Galactic Federation. Therefore, users belonging to the Galactic Federation would have their Star Gate fees or ship maintenance costs paid for by the Galactic Federation. Any necessary equipment for quests could also be rented free of charge.

On the other hand, the quest compensation was a little small but if they could use the mileage method.

“But I’ve heard some mysterious rumours.”

“Mysterious rumours?”

“Rumours about Marquis Jyubel.”

“Marquis Jyubel? Is he doing something again?”

“No, it is the opposite. Marquis Jyubel has been too quiet since the team quest. Until now, he had always been opposing Marquis Martin but there is no movement after the investigation quest. He is the first to withdraw on any political issue he would normally oppose. So there is some talk that Marquis Martin is planning something.”

The reason Cho Min-sun mentioned Marquis Jyubel wasn’t unrelated to Hyun-woo.

Marquis Jyubel and Marquis Martin were rivals. Hyun-woo was clearly on Marquis Martin’s side so he was considered an eyesore. And he attempted to interfere after Ark received S-20 by joining hands with the Laius Company. He also interfered in the investigation team quest with Valencia.

Thus Hyun-woo already had a hostile relationship with Marquis Jyubel. If Marquis Jyubel was planning something then Hyun-woo was likely to be embroiled.

‘But.....’

Hyun-woo wasn't concerned. Hyun-woo knew the whole story behind the magic circle incident.

The Tree of Life gave a fake antimatter material called Mist Uranium. However, Marquis Martin used it to reverse the situation and gain the leadership of the Galactic Federation.

'A week has barely passed since that happened. So it is no wonder Marquis Jyubel didn't make a move. And even if Marquis Jyubel dares to make a move, Marquis Martin monopolized all the information about the antimatter so he isn't a threat to Marquis Martin. Marquis Martin is smart for a NPC.'

When thinking back, it was quite lucky that he met Marquis Martin on Beltana. It could also be considered good luck since he met Irina, Cho Min-sun there. Hyun-woo smiled at the thought and said.

"Are you a little less nervous now?"

"Huh? Ah....."

"Then turn around and say hello."

"Huh? What?"

Cho Min-sun turned her head at Hyun-woo's head. A middle aged couple was approaching her with a smile.

"Hello? This is the first time I'm meeting you. I am Hyun-woo's mother."

"I am the husband of Hyun-woo's mother and father to his brother."

The man talking was Gwon Hwa-rang. And on the other side of him was Park So-mi. Hyun-woo's parents had arrived.

"Ah! I-I'm sorry. I didn't know you arrived."

Cho Min-sun quickly stood up after hearing Gwon Hwa-rang and Park So-mi's words. The loud sound of the chair being pushed back attracted people's attention. Cho Min-sun blushed and fidgeted while Gwon Hwa-rang laughed and spoke in a loud voice.

"Hahahah, a young lady overflowing with youthful enthusiasm."

"Honey, don't do that. You are embarrassing her."

"This is nothing. Young Lady, don't worry. I also became nervous the first time I met someone and brought down a dining table. This is charming compared to that."

Gwon Hwa-rang said as he sat down. And he looked at Cho Min-sun sitting next to Hyun-woo and laughed.

"But this is a nice picture. Okay, pass! I approve. No, in this case shouldn't I thank you for meeting my son? My son isn't someone I can show off."

“Did you come here just to say that?”

“She will discover this truth eventually.”

Gwon Hwa-rang and Hyun-woo started arguing with each other. Then his mother noticed and said to Gwon Hwa-rang.

“Act more moderately. You’re making Min-sun ssi uncomfortable.”

“Ah, no I’m fine.”

His mother shook her head with a smile after hearing Cho Min-sun.

“You should be comfortable. Coming to a place like this will be stressful for anyone. In addition, we haven’t formally met yet. We heard from Hyun-woo’s hyungs that he was acting different. However, I am pregnant at this age. My husband is becoming more stubborn the bigger I get.”

His mother patted her large stomach. Then Gwon Hwa-rang pouted and jumped in.

“Stubborn? What are you saying? This is a blessing.”

“I agree.”

“I don’t want anything to happen to you. A person has less iron at this age.”

“It’s nothing. It is really nice to see.”

“Then I’m glad.”

His mother smiled gently. That conversation cause Cho Min-sun to become more relaxed.

“Well, the greetings are up to here. Let’s have the rest of the conversation after eating something. I’ve been waiting to eat at this buffet so I’ve only drank water. A pregnant woman should also eat well. Now, let’s go! Hyun-woo, advance towards the food!”

“Why are you trying to embarrass me? Have you been starving for a few days?”

“Shut up. What is life? It is about eating. If there is a chance then I will fill up my stomach.”

“This isn’t the 80’s....”

Hyun-woo muttered but followed behind Gwon Hwa-rang. Park So-mi stayed with Cho Min-sun.

“Is he too loud? That guy is originally like this.”

“No. I grew up as an only child so the noise is good.”

“I’m grateful that you think like that. You must have already heard about it from Hyun-woo. When Hyun-woo was young, I was in an accident so he had to live alone. And now my husband and I left to a foreign country so Hyun-woo is alone again.”

“Don’t say that.”

Cho Min-sun shook her head.

“I’ve heard about you from Hyun-woo ssi. Mother is doing volunteer work in Africa. Your volunteering work is directly helping the refugees here. I think it is amazing that Mother is donating your time.”

“It isn’t that great.”

“It is incredible from my point of view. And I’m envious of Hyun-woo for having such parents. I also know Hyun-woo has a lot of respect for his parents. Mother shouldn’t feel like you left Hyun-woo alone. Because you are Hyun-woo’s mother.”

“Omo, isn’t that too much praise?”

“I don’t think so....”

“Hohoho. Just kidding. Indeed. Min-sun ssi is looking at Hyun-woo like that. I’m glad. In fact, I was concerned when I saw Min-sun ssi because you are so pretty.”

“Huh?”

“Men tend to go crazy over a pretty woman. Min-sun ssi is so pretty that I wondered if you actually liked Hyun-woo. But Min-sun ssi is properly taking care of Hyun-woo. I’m glad to realize it. My husband spoke playfully just now but I also have a request. Please look after Hyun-woo. He is an unexpectedly sensitive person unlike his outer appearance.”

Park So-mi bowed her head.

Cho Min-sun was at a complete loss from her actions. She didn’t know how to react but she didn’t feel uncomfortable like when they first met. No, this was actually the first time she felt somewhat comfortable. Park So-mi created an atmosphere that she had almost forgotten and longed for.

Park So-mi caused some strange feelings.

“The basics of a buffet is meat!”

“Are you a caveman? Why are you going for the meat from the very beginning?”

Hyun-woo and Gwon Hwa-rang diligently gathered the food. And they started a full-fledged meal. While Cho Min-sun and Park So-mi were chatting, Hyun-woo and Gwon Hwa-rang started depleting the food.

The atmosphere was full of harmony. Gwon Hwa-rang and Park So-mi were the people who led the atmosphere. They wanted to increase their affinity before returning to Africa.

Gwon Hwa-rang laughed and shouted loudly while Park So-mi helped make the atmosphere comfortable. Thanks to that, Cho Min-sun who felt nervous at first ended up feeling like a family member.

Then Gwon Hwa-rang said.

“But when is the marriage?”

“Cough!”

Hyun-woo received damage from the sudden attack.

“W-what are you saying all of a sudden?”

“Eh? You don’t want to get married?”

“That isn’t the problem!”

“So what is the problem? A man and woman meet and fall in love. Then shouldn’t the following sequence be marriage? You’ve already met two women so I don’t think you can meet a woman as good as Min-sun ssi again. And the saying that marriage is a grave is a lie. Do you know how good marriage is? It is good to enjoy time with a woman like that. So you should quickly marry the best woman when you get the chance. You can only get married once. The world will then turn pink.”

“Father, that....”

Hyun-woo sent Cho Min-sun an uncomfortable look.

Hyun-woo was in his mid-20’s so age wasn’t an enemy. A man of that age wouldn’t be thinking about marital problems. And he also thought about Cho Min-sun once in a while. However, Hyun-woo and Cho Min-sun had only started their relationship for a little over one month.

It wasn’t easy to introduce her to his parents and now there was a sudden mention of marriage? Wasn’t it too early? Cho Min-sun’s face also turned bright red from embarrassment. The table was enveloped in a strange, static atmosphere.

“Omo, is there no more water?”

His mother said as she raised an empty glass. Then Cho Min-sun quickly stood up.

“I have some. Ah!”

An accident occurred at that moment. Cho Min-sun happened to bump into a man passing by when she quickly got up. The plate the man was holding fell and there was a loud sound.

Cho Min-sun's eyes widened.

"Dammit! What are you doing?"

"I-I'm sorry. I didn't see you there. Are you okay?"

"Do you think I'm okay? Can't you see with your own eyes?"

"What? This person...."

Hyun-woo was about to angrily stand up. But someone else reached the man before him.

The man standing before Cho Min-sun was Gwon Hwa-rang. Gwon Hwa-rang patted Cho Min-sun's shoulder before turning to the man and bowing his head.

"I'm sorry. I'll be happy to apologize."

"Who is this mister?"

"Me? Well, I am an applicant to be this young lady's father in law."

"Father in law applicant? Are you joking right now?"

"That's impossible. I'll tell you this. This is a long awaited family's night out to eat. Wasn't there a good mood with everyone blushing? This child didn't deliberately push you. I am happy to pay for the laundry fees."

"Laundry? Do you think I am a beggar? Get lost! That woman...."

"T.h.e.r.e.f.o.r.e!"

The man tried to grab Gwon Hwa-rang's shoulder.

Gwon Hwa-rang raised his head and said.

"I am protecting this person. D.o y.o.u u.n.d.e.r.s.t.a.n.d?"

"T-this person...."

"Sir, I'm really sorry. We will put it away immediately."

The waiters rushed over and started cleaning the food. The man glared at Gwon Hwa-rang and Cho Min-sun before returning to his spot. Cho Min-sun flopped down on her seat and said humbly.

"I'm sorry. Because of me...."

"It is okay. This type of thing occurs in life. Instead, are you hurt? That man was also in the wrong. That person didn't need to react so strongly."

"Why didn't you hit him. Are you joking?"

Hyun-woo frowned. However, Gwon Hwa-rang's expression was sincere.

“A joke? Min-sun ssi was in the mood where she would pay that man back no matter what. Isn’t that right? Huh? What’s wrong with that?”

“Father should’ve stayed back. I would’ve taken care of it.”

“Stop it, Hyun-woo. Min-sun ssi wouldn’t like that. Can’t you see her expression? Hah, what is this? I’m been talking while you have water on you....I’m sorry. I sincerely apologize.”

“It’s nothing. Something like that...no...”

Tears started flowing from Cho Min-sun’s eyes as she stuttered. She quickly shook her head in embarrassment at her reaction.

“No, this is nothing. I don’t feel bad at all. I....”

“It is okay. You will feel better once you clean up in the bathroom. Hyun-woo, Min-sun ssi is going to the bathroom for a while. So behave. Do you understand? You too. I don’t want anything to bother Min-sun ssi while I’m gone.”

Park So-mi grabbed Cho Min-sun’s hand and led her to the bathroom. Even then the tears did not stop. But like she said, the tears weren’t due to embarrassment or alarm.

In fact, she had a reason for her tears. As a child of a mistress, she suffered a number of humiliations due to her half-siblings. Despite that, she never shed one tear.

So why were tears coming out this time? The answer didn’t appear when she asked herself. After Gwon Hwa-rang ran out in front of her and Hyun-woo and Park So-mi looked so concerned, she felt the caring of a family and tears poured out.

“I’m sorry. I....I....”

“It’s okay. You don’t have to say anything. There is no need to hide your tears. People grow closer through different methods. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to become closer.”

“Mother....”

Cho Min-sun returned to the table after 10 minutes.

But after coming out of the bathroom, she looked around with a slightly calculating expression. Park So-mi looked at Hyun-woo and Gwon Hwa-rang eating ribs. Then Park So-mi laughed and said with a deep voice.

“Well done.”

The tears seemed to come back for some reason.

“Hah!”

Cho Min-sun took a deep breath.

Hyun-woo's family left the restaurant shortly after that happened. They had enough to eat and the atmosphere was relaxed. After sending off Gwon Hwa-rang and Park So-mi first, Hyun-woo and Cho Min-sun took a walk through the park.

They silently walked for a long time before Cho Min-sun took a deep breath and said.

"I almost died from shame. Hyun-woo's parents must think I am a strange woman now."

"Then I am the boyfriend of a strange woman."

"What?"

"Just kidding."

Hyun-woo grinned.

"They aren't people who would think that way. They believe in their son."

"I understand that but...."

Cho Min-sun sighed and continued. After a brief moment, she shook her head and laughed brightly.

"They are good people."

"Eh....."

Hyun-woo scratched his head. And he laughed before facing her.

"Well, they are the best."

"...What is this?"

The bald man asked in a low voice.

Four men were in front of the bald man. They were Berami and his henchmen A, B and C. They were the users digging at the ruins on Inquiry only to have it suddenly collapse.

Of course, they could still dig through the collapsed ruins.

But the exclusive grace period had ended. The residents of Inquiry rejoiced over this fact and sent out commercials about the unexcavated ruins. In this situation, the probability of Berami finding good items when he started digging again wasn't very high. But Berami had a more serious problem right now.

'Dammit, I never thought this would happen.'

Once again, Berami had ulterior motives when making the contract with Ark. The mischief he was planning involved the bald man in front of him right now. He was a

professional gamer on a completely different level from Berami. Intelligent and with many strong employees, he was the most notorious pirate in the galaxy.

Berami had unearthed many ruins. His idea was to bring divide the loot with Ark before bringing in the bald man. And the bald man would loot all the artefacts found in the ruins from Ark. Naturally this secret was between Berami and the bald man. Berami would also pretend to be a victim. And after taking care of Ark, he would split the artefacts with the bald man.

But the ruins crumbled due to the rebellion of the octopuses.

“Well, as I mentioned yesterday....”

“Yes, I heard. An opportunity to gain some shares from these ruins. I was bored. The result was a loss but I won’t punish you.”

“Thank you.”

“So, where are my octopuses?”

This was the problem. The bald man was the original owner of the octopuses that Berami borrowed. However, the octopuses self-destructed and there were no traces of them left in the pyramid.

The bald man listened to the explanation with a smile.

“So you killed the octopuses you borrowed from me?”

“I-I didn’t kill them....”

“You just gave me a loss of 100 octopuses.”

The bald man was still smiling. But Berami felt an eerie feeling.

Once again, Berami knew the bald man for a long time. The nature of the bald wasn’t bad. Rather, he was a boring person with no personality. However, that would change 180 degrees when he received some damages.

He would be cutthroat and make the user pay back the price no matter what. Wasn’t that why he had the nickname of private money lender in the industry?

‘This is wrong. That expression means he had no intention of stopping. Damn, I can’t provoke a dangerous guy like this. It will be the end. There is nowhere to escape from him IN Galaxian.’

Therefore Berami had to say something.

“Ark! This is all because of that person called Ark! Yes, the octopuses rebelled because of him. The ruins exploded and the octopuses are dead due to that bastard! So he is to blame for everything!”

“I’m sorry Ark. I also want to live.’

Berami's conscience was pricked but he had no other choice.

If he took all the responsibility then he would be robbed by the bald man! But to be honest, Berami didn't 100% believe his words. He just thought of a random excuse.

But he had no expectations of escaping even after bringing up Ark. Berami looked up and tried to read the bald man's expressions.

"Ark?"

The bald man frowned. And the corners of his mouth rose as he muttered.

"How funny. Yes, this is due to Ark?"

"Here it is."

An office filled with lavish furnishings. A man dressed in a neat suit was holding out a document.

"This is the data about the man associating with your daughter. His name is Kim Hyun-woo. His father was killed in a traffic accident a few years ago and his mother remarried."

"It is a little late."

"I'm sorry. I didn't know the goal of the investigation so it took me a while."

"You don't know the goal...."

"No, I wasn't told the meaning but...."

"For example...."

A man received the piece of paper and said.

"It is my right as a father to give a trial to the man who wants to date my daughter."

"Huh?"

"No, it is nothing. Then please go."

The man shook his head and sat back down in the chair. He turned his chair around and looked out the window with a slight smile.

Space 09: Trouble

S-20's main office.

A weird creature lingered in front of it. The skin colour was constantly changing and 6 legs moved as it sighed.

-They should be coming back today....

-Elder-nim, calm down.

-Calm down? Yes, calm, calm down.

The weird creature nodded its head as it talked. And it took a deep breath and raised its head before suddenly spouting ink.

-Aaaaah! Calm, I can't be calm! Damn, I can't relax at a time like this!

-E-elder-nim! Spewing ink like this isn't good for your health.

-Is my health that important? Haven't I told you before? Aren't our kin miserably slaving away at the frontier? They're probably being kicked and whipped! The young children are being chained by collars and forced to be slaves! Tuntun, don't you know about slavery? It is a miserable life. To think of our kin living such a life....

The weird creature sobbing was none other than Bakum. He was the elder of the Charenjok who lived in S-20.

Bakum had been exposed to news of other Charenjok when Hegel returned on the Silver Star alone. 100 octopuses were forced to be slaves and excavate the ruins. Bakum felt like his heart was breaking.

As an octopus, he was once free. However, the refugees scattered across the universe were now living miserable lives as slaves.

This was hopeful news. Hegel mentioned that Ark didn't condone the plight of the Charejok and was working to free them. He understood the pain of the Charenjok.

Ark might have a plan. Therefore Bakum believed in him.

-And Ark will find the answer. As always...

Like a movie. Ark! Please save them.

But he couldn't help feeling worried. Hegel carried out Ark's instructions and took 50 octopuses therefore the worried Bakum had been waiting for the Silver Star to return. However, there had been no news in the last two days.

Bakum glanced up at the sky and sighed.

–Coming back today....

–Don't worry too much. Has Ark ever let us down?

–Yes, that's right. I believe in him. But...

Kwaaaaaaah!

Then there was a roaring sound from the sky. Bakum and Tutun flinched and turned their eyes towards the clouds in the sky. There was an explosion of light and the silver battleship appeared!

–S-Silver Star! Elder-nim!

–Ohh! Ark! Ark had returned!

Bakum and Tuntun burst out as they ran forward. It wasn't just them. The octopuses working at the artificial lake also ran forward. The octopuses swarmed towards the place where the Silver Star was landing.

And a man appeared when the entrance opened.

–Ark!

The colour on Bakum's head indicated his nervousness as he shouted. Ark glanced at all the octopuses in the area and laughed.

“You are all here.”

–Yes, how did things go? The Charenjok?

“It went well. Every last one is here.”

Ark grinned and looked back at the Silver Star. Then a huge number of octopuses started pouring out of the Silver Star.

The first to come out were the original 50 octopuses from S-20. Then the other 100 octopuses followed them with wide eyes. They were Hakun and the octopuses who were slaves at the pyramid.

–I heard about this place from Ark....

–Ohh, look over there. Water. A lake!

–Can we really live freely in a place like this?

–I can't believe it yet. This isn't a dream?

–Eh? T-that is....!

The octopuses were buzzing noisily. Then Hakun who was looking around suddenly shouted. And he ran towards Bakum and the octopuses swarming at the entrance.

–Elder Bakum-nim! Ohh, it is elder Bakum-nim!

–You are?

–Hakun! I met you once a long time ago.

–Hakun! Yes, I remember. It was before we became refugees. Yes, I saw you. Ah, how long has it been since then?

–Decades have passed. It is enough for me to be considered a young elder.

–Yes, indeed.

–Sob, to be able to meet Elder-nim again is really great....

–Don't say anything. Judging by the cuts and wrinkles on your body, I already understand. You went through a lot of trouble. Well, it is good that you lived.

–Sob! Elder-nim!

Hakun embraced Bakum with tears dripping down his face. In Ark's point of view, it seemed like 2 octopuses were gathered in an area to fight....anyway, it was a touching scene. Octopuses that had suffered after becoming refugees suddenly met again. It was touching but....

–Ark, I don't know how to say thank you.

“This is something I should do as a friend of the Charenjok.”

–We need to thank you properly! My heart has calmed. I once again realized what a blessing it is to have you as a friend of the Charenjok. I won't be able to return this favour for the rest of my lifetime! I need to do something to deserve having you as a friend. Now Ark, do you still have the token that is the symbol of the Charenjok's friendship?

This was the real emotional part!

Once again, Ark had risked himself to free the octopuses who were slaves. The reward given by Bakum!

The effect wasn't enough to change a situation but the Charenjok's token was definitely helpful. He had rescued 100 Charenjok, thus meeting the conditions to upgrade the token.

However, this didn't proceed easily.

–Elder-nim, again?

The octopuses around Bakum went crazy.

–That's enough! Hasn't Elder-nim already lost 2 legs? If you lose another leg then your health....when walking you won't be able to maintain your centre of balance.

–Something else! Think about something else to give in return!

–Enough! Despite being refugees, we have never lost the pride of the Charenjok. It would be shameful for the Charenjok if we don't return the favour! And what other way to we have to pay back his grace? This time Ark has rescued 100 people. Isn't one leg worth 100 people being saved?

....Well, it was like this.

But Ark stayed out of it.

The octopus had to get rid of a part of its body. Of course, he was hoping for this but he didn't want to ask for it. And there was no need to bother.

He had roughly sensed the atmosphere after the second leg. The octopuses would fuss but the token would eventually be upgraded. The formula was established so there was no need to fuss when it would end up in the desired direction. Ark kept plenty of space between him and Bakum.

“Tori, Milan, Hegel, move the borrowed weapons back to Hamad's department store. I'll be waiting at the office after it is cleaned up.”

Tori started to clean up the warehouse.

“Hmm, there will be less fish in the lake now. Should I widen the channel?”

He looked at the food factory and artificial lake.

–Wow! Wow! Wow!

The little octopuses played around.

During this time, the situation with Bakum had been cleared up.

–Pant pant, Ark, I'm sorry for making you wait. Now hand over the Charenjok token.

The result was what he expected.

–Yes! Ohhhhhh! Haaayaahh!

Bakum grinded his teeth together tightly after Ark handed him the Charenjok token. His head turned red as he bit his leg off. Then the leg started attaching to the Charenjok's Token. And it stayed attached to the head of the token. It joined Bakum's other two legs to make it seem like a real octopus.

–A special feature has been added to the Charenjok's Token!

Charenjok's Token (Special) Lv: 3

Item Type: Recovery, Secondary

The Charenjok's Token was originally sold as a souvenir.

It is cute and could sometimes be used as a recovery item so a lot was sold to pioneers. But the Charenjok's Token has a hidden secret. This secret can only be activated by the power of a Charenjok Elder. However the elder has to sacrifice a part of their body in order to awaken the power.

Not many Charenjok elders would be willing to sacrifice a part of their body unless they need to repay a pioneer. Therefore not many pioneers know about the true strength of the token.

<Recovery from poison, your health will recover by 3 every 4 seconds for 10 minutes
Cool down time: 1 hour>

1st Evolution (Growth): The accumulated experience can increase the effectiveness of the basic ability.

2nd Evolution (Ink Jet): The token has the ability to produce the ink naturally created by the Charenjok. When the ink jet hits the opponent's face, it can cause the 'blind' state for 30 seconds. The Ink Jet can be fired 5 times and it requires 10 hours to recharge.

3rd Evolution (Octopus's Blessing): The Charenjok's body contained a high density of nutrients such as DHA and EPA and the token is able to inject these nutrients into the user in the form of a blessing. The infusion of nutrients is like drinking a nutritional drink and will become active in the user's body over a period of time.

<All stats +10% for 30 minutes. Cool down time: 2 hours>

3rd evolution!

Despite the fact that he used it continually to gain experience, the token was still stuck at Lv. 3 but the leg had added a new skill. The name of the skill was Octopus's Blessing!

'I honestly didn't expect much from the skill performance....'

He had obtained Ink Jet with the 2nd evolution. However, it had a short range and the drawback was that it might be aimed at the face to be triggered. It was hard to use without the element of surprise.

Of course, it was decent for a secondary equipment but the utilization couldn't help but fall below general skills. Therefore he didn't have great expectations for the 3rd evolution. He just thought it would improve by a little bit. But the result was beyond imagination!

The 'Octopus's Blessing' gave rich nutrients such as DHA and EPA to increase the effect of all stats by 10% for 30 minutes. It was a buff that could be applied to all situations! Furthermore, the percentage would rise with the level. If the level increased then the buff applied to his stats would be higher.

‘I never imagined that the skill would be at his level.’ If it upgrades a few more times then this would be a huge item!’

Ark swallowed his saliva and stared at Bakum’s legs. Bakum had 5 legs remaining after biting one off. There was a chance to evolve 5 more times. Bakum would just become a ball but....

–Huhuhu, don’t worry about me.

Bakum said with a warm smile.

–I once had to give up everything. If I hadn’t met you in the northern lake then I would’ve died of old age. But now my body is filled with hope. I might have lost 3 legs but it is all for our saviour. I am proud of this. I am also willing to remove my remaining legs for the future of the Charenjok.

Bakum promised to give future compensation.

‘I also haven’t brought the octopuses on R-14 yet.’

In fact, Ark had contemplated bringing them when he was on Inquiry. He thought about bringing Burum and the others on R-14. However, Ark decided to delay going to R-14.

There were two reasons for this. The first was that the Silver Star already contained 150 octopuses so there was no more room. He wouldn’t be able to bring even 1 octopus from R-14. The probability of only one octopus leg being used to upgrade was high.

‘There is no need to take a risk to bring them together.’

He would save the octopuses on R-14 for a future opportunity. Burum was in charge of at least 100 octopuses so he was sure to get another leg.

‘Okay. One of those legs is reserved.’

Ark greedily looked at Bakum’s legs.

–Hehehe, don’t be concerned. I’m fine.

Bakum laughed with his 5 legs. Anyway....

“Is it not ready yet?”

The balcony of the Management Office. Ark muttered while looking at the breathtaking view of S-20.

It had been five days since Ark left S-20 to find the 3rd Divine Artefact. So not much time had passed. In addition, there were no significant changes in the sector because most funds were tied to the planet development issue. It wasn’t a surprise but Ark had been expecting one major change when he got back to S-20.

This was the Star Gate connecting S-20 and Ikyullos. He had hoped the Star Gate would be finished by the time he got back from Inquiry. But Marquis Martin hadn't even started the construction for the Star Gate yet.

'I didn't think it would take that much time to obtain the budget....'

The Star Gate was a donation from Marquis Martin. He had promised to make some room for it in the Galactic Federation's budget. If the construction was delayed then he could only think something detrimental had occurred.

But he didn't feel uneasy.

'The other person is Marquis Martin. It might be a little late but I'm sure the construction will proceed without any problems. I feel impatient but there is no need to rush. I still need time to gather the funds to develop the planet.'

Ark was prepared in his own way. The first method was the investment shares in Beltana and Charem. The auction had finished by the time he returned to S-20.

-The auction items have been sold.

<5% Investment Share in Beltana: Bid price of 750 gold>

<5% Investment Share in Athamas: Bid price of 800 gold>

<3% Investment Share in Charem: Bid price of 1,120 gold>

He earned 2,670 gold as a result. It was low for everything he suffered on Beltana, Athamas and Charem but he just needed to think of the investment stake as extra income. And it would only be a burden on him if he kept it.

He sold it for a reasonable price at the appropriate time.

'These funds are necessary for the development of a new planet. And there are methods of earning money other than the investment shares.'

"Rapid?"

Ark turned and asked. Bain bowed and replied.

"Not long ago, there was a complaint about a group of thieves so he went to deal with it. But he should come back soon."

"Then I'll need to wait to discuss the funds with Rapid...."

Ark turned to Mellin.

"The space food production factory?"

"There are few fish species so there is a limit on the development of new products. However, the factory is operating with no problems. These days, the number of fish are

being reduced so there are times when the Charenjok have been required to leave the lake. The Charenjok are supplying fish in the day and night shifts but it is slowly reaching the limit. And now you have brought 100 more Charenjok.”

Once again, Ark hadn’t brought the octopuses from Inquiry just for the upgraded token. Ark had determined the situation occurring at the food production factory. The number of fish was decreasing so Bakum was finding it hard to maintain the appropriate fish supply. The factory needed a steady workforce to operate.

Ark brought 100 octopuses to the food production factory to relieve labour shortages. However, there was a problem.

Mellin scratched his head and said.

“But 100 is too much. Considering the problem, 50 octopuses would be able to solve it. If we divide the earnings according to the contract then some Charenjok will be unemployed.....”

“I don’t think that will happen.”

Those who don’t work won’t eat. That was one of Ark’s rules. It was the same for the octopuses at the sector. Ark was also planning to migrate the octopuses on R-14 to S-20.

It meant the number of unemployed would increase further. Measures were necessary to stop this.

“We need a new business idea.”

“New business?”

“Yes, like Mellin-nim said, the fish in the lake is barely enough for the food production factory. So there is no use in buying another food maker.”

“That’s right.

“Besides, I will probably accept more Charenjok in the future. If so, the number of octopuses just playing around might reach 150. I think this is a good opportunity. Most of S-20’s current income relies on commerce. Commerce is profitable but it can fluctuate. So we might not to expand the primary industry in order to earn a stable income. Along with the future development of the planet, new businesses are required to increase the scale of S-20.”

“Certainly.....”

Mellin nodded his head.

“I understand. Then I will look for an appropriate business.”

Then a ‘;;’ floated above Mellin’s head. It indicated confusion. Finding a business for 150 octopuses to work wasn’t as easy as it seemed. But an answer hadn’t appeared yet.

And Ark had separate work to do.

“Hamad, what is the current status of S-20’s funding?”

“Well, the sector funds....”

Ark, Bain, Hamad and Mellin were having a sector management meeting. All of a sudden, the door burst open and someone ran in.

“Eh? Rapid!”

“Ark! You bastard!”

The person who ran in was Rapid.

“Rapid, have you been well?”

Ark said with a smile. Then Rapid grabbed Ark’s collar and shook him.

“Have you been well? What is your mouth saying? What the hell is manager of handling complaints? My head is already full from the investment fund so why are you giving me the title? Am I your servant? Huh? Your servant?”

“Huh? Your head is full? I figured that you know about business since you graduated from K University.”

“Talking like that.....”

“And putting you in charge of the complaints couldn’t be helped. Do you know why? You are the only user apart from Kurakan. But you know Kurakan....he is a little annoying. You are the only person I can trust. Well, you’re right. You don’t need to do it! It doesn’t matter what happens to S-20 in the meantime! You are the only one I can entrust it to. The only rival that I recognize, Alan! That’s what you are! You can leave. But if you leave then who can I entrust the sector to?”

“This bastard keeps on speaking nonsense.....”

“I’m serious. Look, my eyes are filled with faith.”

“Dammit, I must be crazy. Why did I join an Agent like this....?”

Rapid retreated from the expression in Ark’s eyes. But his expression wasn’t angry. It was more disbelieving.

Ark laughed before looking back at Hamad.

“Use 2,500 gold of the sector funds to pay Tori.”

“2,500 gold? What is going on?”

“I found a blueprint in the ruins. The blueprint still isn’t identified but it was found in the Murat ruins.”

“One of the 4 species, the Murat?”

“Yes, it is an ancient civilization but they are a species with excellent science and technology. So the blueprint from the Murat ruins is worth studying. Tori and Jay needed a considerable amount of time to study it.”

“That is another matter....”

Hamad scratched his head and muttered.

“I normally wouldn’t mind but aren’t we already planning to develop the planet?”

“We don’t need to worry about the planet development funds because Rapid is taking care of it.”

“Don’t say that so easily! It isn’t that simple!”

Rapid snapped angrily at Ark’s words. Ark tilted his head to one side and asked.

“Why, you can’t do it?”

“What? By myself? Who are you talking to?”

“Have confidence in yourself. Haven’t you heard? Securing funds for the planet development isn’t a problem.”

“T-this bastard....”

“I told you. I believe in you.”

Ark said as he looked at Rapid.

“Speaking of that...is there any problems with the investment fund? Is it going well?”

“It is all done!”

Rapid picked up a pile of documents and shouted. Just glancing at it was enough to tell that the pile of documents was at least 10 centimetres thick. It would take a few hours to read. A large amount of time would have been required to create such documents.

But Ark didn’t even read it. He wouldn’t understand it even if he read it so he was going to leave it all to Rapid. Rapid would have the unenviable job while Ark just needed to receive his reports.

‘It is good to be the boss.’

“Then do you have everything required to implement this?”

Ark asked as he put aside the documents and Rapid replied in a testy voice.

“Ignorant fellow, do you know what is required? The most important thing is still remaining. We need to inspect the planet. We need to grasp the products that will yield a profit.”

“So shall we put it off for now? Well done.”

“Well done?”

“Actually, I have a difficult problem.”

Ark had a reason for hurriedly organizing the sector problems. In fact, Ark’s Nymphe had received a mail while he was returning to S-20 on the Silver Star. Not long ago, Ark had received an official Agent request from the Silver Hand mercenary leader Clem.

–Ark!

This matter is urgent.

The scouts I sent to the dungeon in the Vesta region misjudged the situation. The monsters here are stronger than I thought. And they are also smarter.

We were stupid and they lured us deep into the dungeon. We were fortunate enough to find a safe place but we are isolated and will be eventually wiped out.

I hope you receive this mail because we are killed.

Your help is needed. I don’t know how long we can hold out.

Please. You are the only person I can trust.

Quickly....

Caller: Silver Hand mercenary leader Clem.

Clem’s SOS!

‘I didn’t take it seriously....’

The situation had progressed in an unforeseen direction.

It was fortunate that the employees he dispatched to help Clem were NPCs like Berad, Ralph, Kalliben, Carly, Beleol, Cupa, Hedro, Reben and Konsed who could revive after dying.

So he wouldn’t lost his employees even in the worst case situation. However, his relationship with the Silver Hand had reached a significant level and it would also cost a lot for the Royal Guards to revive with the Fairy.

‘The Royal Guards registered with the Fairy before leaving S-20. But the members hasn’t resurrected yet. At least there are no casualties among them yet. According to the contents of the letter, they have found a safe place to hide.’

It wasn’t a situation where he could act slowly. However, Ark couldn’t go there alone. If the Silver Hand needed to request help then the enemies must be strong.

“Bain, the mercenaries who participated in the investigation team with me. Are Slayer, Sadain and Kaya still in S-20?”

“No, they dispersed after you left. They said they would return when the Star Gate is complete to look at the planet they invested in. Kaya actually left with Rapid to take care of the thieves but she stormed off cursing after they returned.”

“Eh?”

What does that mean? Ark stared at Rapid after hearing the unexpected report. Then Rapid shouted with a displeased expression.

“Do not say anything! I don’t know what happened!”

“What did you say?”

“Look with your own eyes, your eyes!”

“I am a man so I don’t understand Kaya....”

Anyway, it would be hard to recall Slayer, Leon, Melina, Sadain, Park and Kaya right away. But Ark wasn’t worried about it. There were still employees of Dark Eden remaining.

The first one was Rapid and....

‘This is due to my inexperience! ‘

Kwa kwa kwa kwa! Kwa kwa kwa kwa!

A cool stream of water poured to the lake below. A man was sitting on a rock being hit by the water.

The man was wearing a turban and light armour. His appearance had changed a lot but it was the strongest warrior of the Kusan clan on Rakunka, Ellain. But he had been depressed in the last few days.

The reason was due to Ark.

‘When I left Rakunka, I swore to always stay at Ark-nim’s side. But Ark had left him in this place. I still lack the skills to be Ark-nim’s subordinate!’

This troubled him deeply. Ellain believed that he had disappointed Ark. It was why Ellain wasn’t asked to accompany Ark. Ellain knew that the Messenger of God had tremendous power.

‘I am very ashamed. The strongest warrior of the Kusan clan....it means nothing. Instead of helping Ark-nim, I am just a burden. I need to become stronger in order to truly serve Ark-nim. And now I am one step closer to completing Asuldan’s sword technique!’

It was the reason why Ellain was sitting there!

Training! Become a strong warrior! And become a true subordinate to Ark!

Over the last five days, Ellain had been training along at the waterfall.

‘Now all the preparations are over. This time....’

“Welcome to the alter ego!”

Ellain’s eyes flashed as he yelled. Ellain suddenly increased to 5 bodies that launched towards the waterfall. Ellain used the skill Welcome to the Alter Ego. But in the next moment, dozens of black lights burst from the swords of the alter egos and exploded on the waterfall.

An information window then appeared in front of Ellain.

-A new skill has been added to Welcome to the Alter Ego.

Phantom Rampage (Users, Active): Phantom Rampage is an extension of Welcome to the Alter Ego but the manifestation is completely different.

Welcome to the Alter Ego only creates alter egos but Phantom Rampage can deal damage to the enemy. If Phantom Rampage succeeds then the alter egos can attack a single enemy or separate to attack different enemies. The damage will correspond to 70% of the normal attack.

<Create 2~4 alter egos that can attack the enemy>

Mana consumption: 100

Chwaaaaah!

“I-It’s a success!”

Ellain looked up at the waterfall pouring down and shouted. Then an octopus rose out of the lake and said.

–*Ellain-nim, Ark-nim is calling!*

“Now, let’s see?”

Kurakan smiled and lifted a large object. Kurakan had recently realized something.

A long-awaited SF game. He would rather shoot a machine gun than use a common sword! This was why Kurakan chose a machine gun as his primary weapon. And he used unlimited bullets to show off his skills. But he realized something after meeting Ark and the high level NPCs.

‘Keuk! I’m no good in shooting!’

He only had a 20~30% hit rate despite pouring out gunfire. Kurakan originally thought his weapon was a machine gun. But it wasn't. Apart from Rapid's unusual existence, other high level users also had a 60~70% hit rate when using machine gun.

When comparing the hit rate of the M-620 machine gun, his 30% rate was shameful compared to 60~70%.

‘My position....’

But it was too late to feel regret. He had only used a machine gun since starting the game. On Muratio Star, he had earned the profession ‘Heavy Gunner.’

Now he could use different weapons. Therefore the distressed Kurakan found an answer. The answer was the machine gun he was holding right now!

-M-620

A rare machine gun that fires 20 rounds per minute.

Additional Mounting: <Target tracking device>, <Recoil reduction device>, <Ballistic stabilizer>, <Impact mitigation device>.....

“This is the method!”

Kurakan found a way by modifying his gun! His shooting skill was insufficient so he used these devices to assist him. Thanks to that, the bulk had doubled! A machine gun with too many secondary devices!

“Now, jet fire! My neo M-620!”

Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu! Tu tu tu tu!

Bullets flew from M-620 as the trigger mechanism was pulled. Anyone hit by it would instantly turn to tatters! In the past, his aim was spread all over the place and there was unstable recoil so the hit rate couldn't reach 60~70%.

“Wuhahaha! How about it? Now I can be an assaulter!”

The satisfied Kurakan let out a burst of laughter. Then a member of the Belkin clan shouted from behind him.

“Hey! Kurakan, Ark hyung-him is looking for us!”

“Look at this.”

Deep in the dark somewhere. Someone laughed and rubbed their fingers on their skin. The black dust fell off and revealed immaculate flesh.

“Isn’t it unbelievably white? Huhuhu, we have turned completely white due to no exposure from the sun. If we spend more time here then we won’t need whitening cosmetics. My head now seems to be completely white. “No, it really is white. Huhuhu.”

“Kuack, stop.”

The person with him moaned. Then another man holding a shovel on the side laughed.

“Hyung-nim, look at this. Finally the count has reached 50,000. Isn’t it amazing? We dug so many times in one day. Each dig is worth 1 copper so we’ve already earned 5 gold. Hohoho, if this continues then won’t we be rich?”

“Ugh, I told you to stop!”

“Hyung-nim, I’m going to say this. I want to live happily. Something like this....”

“Stop! Stop! Stop! Please stop!”

The man shouted indignantly. He stared at the two others in front of him before suddenly crying and embracing them.

“Huhuhuhu! I’m sorry, I’m sorry! This is because Hyung was incompetent. Yes, it is all my fault. So stop. I’d rather you blame me. Release your spirit by damning me.”

“H-Hyung-nim....”

“Huk! Sob sob sob. Hyung-nim!”

In the end, tears poured out the eyes of the two other men. They were Ferguson and his brothers A and B. After losing their ship on the quest and being caught by Ark, they were forced to go to S-20.

And after five days in the dungeon. Sleeping, eating, shovelling, shovelling, shovelling, eating, sleeping, shovelling, shovelling....

Their head and skin turned white from digging in the dark cave and their spirits became crazy. Despite that, they hadn’t forgotten.

‘This is due to Ark. Ark is our natural enemy. Even if he wasn’t the Ark of New World, we shouldn’t have been involved with any user with that name. But it is too late. Ark already has our phone number and address.’

They had spent several years in New World being frightened of Ark. And they were still afraid now that Ark had their phone number and address.

‘However, I am still a user who once ranked 19th. Ah, those days are really like a dream. Now that we’ve been caught twice by Ark, there is no way to come back. That Ark bastard from New World has caught us. Now I don’t know when we will see the sun again. No, that can’t be! It doesn’t matter to me but I can’t stand to see them look so pitiful. I will grab Ark’s leg and beg him to save both of them!’

Ark was against him. Ferguson made that choice for A and B. This was the only hope that Ferguson had devised. Ferguson, A and B were digging while the Belkin that brought them there ran in and shouted.

“Hey! Job workers, Ark hyung-nim is calling you!”

“Well....”

S-20’s main office.

Ark glanced at the people gathered around the Silver Star. Rapid, Ellain, Kurakan, Ferguson, A and B. And Asuran. They were the employees with power still remaining in Dark Eden.

It wasn’t a large number but the Royal Guards had already been dispatched. And there was no need to talk about Rapid’s capabilities.

And Ellain. Although he was a NPC that wouldn’t resurrect using a Fairy, he was a warrior stronger than Ark. There was also an ‘!’ mark on his head indicated that he had learnt a new skill.

Kurakan was holding a drastically revamped machine gun in front of Ark.

Ferguson, A and B weren’t employees but they were Ark’s slaves. However, they were on a different level from the octopuses. Ark obtained a slave that had once reached the 18th rank among users. Although their firepower depended on the equipment. Tori was going to stay in S-20 to research the blueprint but Milan and Hegel were ready to steer the Silver Star.

And.....

Character Information Window			
Name	Ark (R-02788)	Level	153
Species	Human	Occupation	Elim’s Heir
Fame	24,730	Adventure	2,040
Health	3,600 (+575)	Mental Power	825 (+490)
Mana	0	Force	3,040
Strength	385 (+80)	Agility	415 (+128)

Stamina	605 (+105)	Wisdom	40 (+23)
Intelligence	395 (+98)	Luck	45 (+18)
Leadership	10		

* Title

Ignorant Destroyer (Wisdom -10, Strength +7, Stamina +7)

Spatial Breakthrough (Strength, Agility, Stamina, Wisdom, Intelligence, Luck +10)

Beltana's Hero (Strength, Agility, Stamina, Wisdom, Intelligence, Luck +3)

Athamas' Hero (Strength, Agility, Stamina, Wisdom, Intelligence, Luck +5)

Mediator (Wisdom, Intelligence +15)

* Set Item Effect (Strength, Agility, Stamina +10. Defense +20)

* Contribution: Galactic Federation 27,520, Aschulat 500

* Affiliation: Dark Eden (CEO)

*Body Coating: Survivor

+ Environmental adaptation increases by 50% due to the Survivor coating.

+ The Survivor coating reduces the drop rate of Satiety by 30%.

+ The Survivor coating will reduce fall damage by 50%.

+The 'Clairvoyance' effect of the Survivor coating is applied.

Ark!

Nine people were organized to rescue the Silver Hand.

"There is no time. We will depart straight away! Everybody board the Silver Star."

They were already trapped. It wasn't considered dangerous yet but the situation might deteriorate. The crew climbed aboard the Silver Star.

Suddenly the clouds in the skies about S-20 spread out. And there was a ring of light before an airship appeared. A moderately famous person was on-board that airship. The ship that emerged....

"This? It is clearly Marquis Martin...."

The airship had the private flag of Marquis Martin. Not surprisingly, Marquis Martin was on the airship.

“Marquis-nim is here?”

“Ah, I just finished some work. Are you going somewhere?”

“Yes, there is a small problem. Did something happen? Coming here yourself....”

“That.....”

Marquis Martin frowned.

And he hesitated for a moment before sighing and speaking.

“I don’t know what is going on but there is a place you need to go with me first.”

TO BE CONTINUED